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Tale of A Violin.

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OF

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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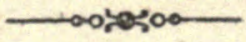
CAMILLA:

A TALE OF A VIOLIN.

BEING THE ARTIST LIFE OF

CAMILLA URSO.

By CHARLES BARNARD.



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PREFATORY NOTE.

The intelligent reader, on opening a new book, asks why it was written, — what excuse has it for existence. In this particular case the author has more reasons than it is worth while to repeat. If there is any one thing that is attracting the general attention of the American people, it is the art of music. It is a good sign. It shows we are getting beyond the mere tree-felling and prairie-clearing stages of our existence, and coming to something better. This true "Tale of a Violin" has to do with music. It is the story of a real musical life; not wholly American, and therefore instructive. It has much, also, to do with our people and country and our own times, and is therefore

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interesting and home-like. It has to do with methods of teaching music in foreign countries; and for the student this artist-life is full of valuable suggestions. All of this can be properly said, because it is the artist-life of a person now living among us. These are the excuses for its existence.

The facts and incidents were supplied by Madam Camilla Urso herself at such stray moments of leisure as could be found during a busy concert season at Boston, in the months of January and February, 1874; and the work was done at such spare moments as the writer could find in the midst of journalistic cares. Such events as could be noted in one evening having been written out, they were read aloud before Madam Urso and others, and when brought up to the exact truth in every detail, and fully approved by such persons as were entitled to an opinion, were given to the printer.

So the book came to be. If it leads one reader to see the value of a life devoted to art, — if it helps one lonely student struggling for a musical education, by the splendid example of a life of toil and poverty crowned by a great reward, — the work will not be wholly vain, nor will it want excuse for being.

The author would express his thanks for the kind assistance of the Urso family of New York, and Mr. John S. Dwight and others, of Boston.

THE AUTHOR.

BOSTON, September, 1874.

CAMILLA;

A TALE OF A VIOLIN.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE DAWN.

About thirty miles from the sea, on the River Loire, in France, stands the quaint, sleepy old town of Nantes. The Erdre and the Sevre, two smaller streams unite with the Loire just here and the town is spread out in an irregular fashion over the islands, the little capes between the rivers, and the hills that stand round about. The old part of the town is on the hill-side and occupies the two islands called Freydean and Gloriette, the more modern city has spread over the surrounding country among the groves of chestnut, and the vineyards that fill every available spot where the grapes can get a good look at the sun all through the long sunny days.

The river runs swift and bright through the town and flashes under the handsome bridges with their long rows of stone arches. In the river are boats, ships, and steamers, for the good people there spend much of their time in commerce and in catching and curing the silver-white pilchards that swim in such great schools in the neighboring sea.

The broad quays that skirt the river are planted with trees, making a most delightful walk, and near the eastern end of the town one of the quays ends at what remains of an old chateau or palace. The houses are mostly of stone, with slated roofs. There are some fine stores in the Place Royal that are quite as grand as those in Paris. There are also some old, old churches black with age, dim and vast inside, with statuary on the outer walls, and splendid gothic towers that seem to blossom all over with stone flowers as they climb so far up into the sky above the quaint old town.

Round about the town are gardens and summer houses, pleasant walks and drives, vineyards, groves and all the things that go to make a charming rural scene.

In the Place Graslin is a fine theatre and a handsome Town Hall. Of these buildings more presently when we come to see what happened within them.

In this old French town in June 1846 there lived a very little girl just four years old. Her home was on the first floor of a small house on a narrow street not

far from the Place de la Monnaie, an open square that led into one of the principal streets known as the Rue Voltaire. The house was built in the usual French fashion with a large arch-way under the house that led into a court-yard in the centre. The front door opened into the shady archway, and the window balconies were filled with flowering plants in pots.

Her name was Camilla. Her father Monsieur Salvatore Urso played the flute in the orchestra at the theatre, or opera house, and on Sundays played the organ at the Church of the Holy Cross that stood facing a little square not far from the river.

Her mother Madame Emelie Urso was a young and very handsome woman, and a fine singer. She also helped her husband in his music lessons. She was born in Lisbon in Portugal, but as she had come to France when quite young, she had forgotten her mother tongue and now spoke French and Italian. This last may have been owing to the fact that her husband was from Palermo, Sicily. With Camilla's parents lived her mother's sister, Caroline, whom we shall know as aunt Caroline. This made the Urso household.

Both of Camilla's parents were young and she was their oldest child and only daughter. There was at this time a baby brother and later there were three more brothers. The first four years of the little one's life were passed in an uneventful manner, very much in the fashion of other children everywhere. When

she was four years old she began to go to the theatre with her father. Every night she put her small hand in his and trotted off to the Place Graslin to sit with him in the orchestra among the violins and close beside her father's flute. He was a noted player in those days and the little one shared his seat, with the music book spread before her, and the stage in full view.

It was quite a fine theatre and many notable things took place there. Operas, both new and old, were given, and often between the acts, a piano was brought out and such famous players as traveled in that part of France appeared and showed what they could do. Celebrated violinists and great singers also appeared at times. So it happened that the little Camilla almost lived in the midst of an orchestra and before she was five years old had heard many of the best players and singers of the times.

The orchestra became almost a second home to her. The lights, the crowds of people, the music were every day matters and she grew up to be quite indifferent to the public character of such a life. Most children would have soon learned to go to sleep in the midst of it all. Camilla never thought of such a thing. While the music went on she was content. If she could only nestle down in a corner where she could hear those violins and her father's flute she was perfectly happy in a demure and sober fashion that was infinitely amusing in such a very small girl.

On Sundays and on fête days when the church was

open she went with her father to the church of the Holy Cross.

The church was an old one and to reach the organ loft high up over the great portal they had to climb a steep and winding stair in the great tower. The stairs were worn deep with footsteps so that it was hard climbing for the little one. Still, she always went with her father and mother. Did he not play the tall organ with its great white pipes, and did her mother not sing? She had a good seat where she could look up at the black arches springing so high overhead, or down on the people who seemed so small in the church far below.

When there was no theatre or church she played about her mother's room or under the trees in the public gardens, very much in the fashion of other French girls.

Playing in an orchestra is not the road to wealth. The pay was very small, and even with the organ salary and the music lessons things did not prosper very happily and the little Camilla had to content herself with such juvenile joys as could be procured without very much money. This, happily, did not make much difference. There was enough to eat and pretty good things to wear and no end of music. This last seemed to quite satisfy her. The orchestra, the organ and the choir afforded her perpetual amusement, and her life was as happy as that of the most favored child in the town.

When not listening to music she was very active and merry and displayed an abundant fund of good health and spirits. She early learned to talk and walk and was considered an unusually bright and precocious girl. Her earliest months gave a hint of her love for music. If fretful or peevish with weariness or ill-health she could soon be pacified by a gentle song from her father as he carried her about in his arms.

The first intimation of a desire to make music herself came when she was three years old. Hearing a hand-organ play in the street while the family were at dinner she softly left the table and went into the next room. Presently the tune on the hand-organ was repeated on the piano in the parlor. Her father opened the door quickly only to find the child trying to hide, as if she had done something wrong.

Before she could talk she could hum over or sing a number of songs, and at four years of age could repeat in a thin piping voice many of the songs and airs sung by her mother and always insisting that the accompaniment should be played while she sang.

She did not go to school. Hardly any children in the town had any such advantage. There were a few small primary schools and that was about all the chance that was open to the young people of Nantes for an education.

So far in Camilla's life it did not make any particular difference. Things were going on quite to her satisfaction and she was perfectly happy even if she could not read or write.

Thus in a quiet way with much music the months had slipped away till she was five years old. Then suddenly came the awakening of a new life. Something happened that cast the rosy glow of coming day over the twilight of her life. The morning star that shone out clear and bright before her young eyes took the shape of a violin solo in a mass called St. Cecilia. She was in the church when its promise-speaking light flashed upon her. There was an orchestra, and a full chorus, with the organ. The little Camilla now almost six years old sat in the old organ loft and heard it all. She listened and dreamed and wondered and wished and wished she could only do something like that solo for the first violin. An ordinary piece of music, indifferently played, but somehow it enchained her whole attention. It threw wide open the pearly gates of a new and fairer life.

Many a time she had heard famous players at the theatre. They had never interested her as did this one. He was not a very fine player. His music was not particularly wonderful, but there was something about it that pleased her greatly. She had been already excited by the music. The majestic and noble character of the mass, the chorus sounding so loud and grand through the church, the orchestra, her father's organ with its great thunder tones rolling under it all, had sent the blood tingling through her veins. The great company kneeling on the floor so far below. The lights and flowers on the altar. The blue clouds of incense rising softly on the air and the dusky bars of

colored light slanting across the springing arches. The scene, the music, everything affected her. Then that song on the violin. It was beautiful — and — if she could. No — she never, never could — and it was all a dream. She was even reluctant to leave for home after the service was over and wanted to linger in the vast, dim church and dream it all over again.

If she only could play like that — if she could have a real violin, all her own and play on it, why, that would be just too wonderfully grand and splendid for anything. There were not words in the French language that could express the pleasure it would give her. She could not speak of it. It was too good to talk about.

For several days she thought about it and dreamed of it and wondered if it would do to tell her father and ask him to give her a violin. At last the secret became unbearable and on creeping into her mother's bed before daylight one morning for her regular petting she ventured to lisp to her mother that she wanted a violin—"a real one, to play upon herself."

The morning star faded away quickly, and there was only the dull grey dawn in the child's sky. Her mother treated her request with laughter and put out the little Camilla's hope with a flat refusal.

CHAPTER II.

SUNRISE.

It was the town talk. The women gathered round the fountain in the Place Royal and filled their water jars and gossiped about Salvatore Urso's silly whim with his child. Madame Dubois settled her cap and gave it as her opinion that no good would come of such a foolish thing. Madame Tilsit knew better, if the child wanted to play, why, let her play. The priest would not forbid it. Madame Perche knew it was far better than teaching children to read. That would lead them to dreadful infidelity, and what not. Besides, what will you? M. Urso will do as he pleases with the child.

At its best Nantes is a sleepy place, and in those days it was more narrow, petty and gossipy than can be imagined. A small town in New England where every mother's daughter can read is bad enough, but in a compact French town where every one must live next door or next floor to everybody else gossip runs wild. Totally ignorant of books or any matter outside of their own town, the people must needs fall back on themselves and quietly pick each other to pieces. Everybody had heard that Salvatore Urso, the flute player

intended to teach his little girl the violin. Part of the town approved of this bold, audacious step and part of the town thought it eminently improper, if not positively wicked. There was the Urso party and the anti-Urso party. They talked and quarrelled over it for a long time in a fashion that was quite as narrow minded and petty as could be imagined and it was more than a year before the excitement subsided.

In the meantime the little Camilla was perfectly happy over her new violin. The first refusal had not discouraged her. She waited a few days and then repeated her request to her father. No. It could not be. This did not seem to disconcert her, for in a few days she again asked if she might have a violin and a teacher. This time the refusal was not so decided. Again and again did the little one ask for a violin—only a violin—that was enough. The importunate pleading carried the day and the father took the matter into consideration.

Boys might play the violin, but a girl. That was quite another thing. One girl had been known to play the violin. Mlle. Theresa Melanello had played the violin, why not Camilla? If she wished to play so much it must be that she had genius. Should it prove true she might become a famous artist and win a great fortune. Perhaps, even sooner, much money might come from the child's playing.

Of course the child must at once go to Paris and enter the Conservatory of music. Paris was a long way

off. It would cost a deal of money to get there and when there, it would cost a deal more to live, and there was no way of earning anything in Paris. The theatre, the church and the lessons enabled them to live tolerably well in Nantes. To give up these things would be simple folly. It could not be done. The prospect was brilliant, the way seemed inviting, but it was not available. In his doubt and perplexity over the matter M. Urso went to his friend and companion in the orchestra, Felix Simon. M. Simon played the first violin at the theatre, and one night they talked it over between the acts.

If Camilla was so exceedingly anxious to play she must have some latent talent. Should she prove a genius or a prodigy it might be the means of bringing the family a fortune. Paris offered the only field for instruction and Paris meant a very great deal of money. With her present limited resources the thing was not to be considered for a moment.

M. Simon heard it all patiently, talked with the child about it and before her very eyes turned himself into an angel by offering to teach her himself. At first the family could not believe that such good fortune was possible. Still, it was true. M. Simon would teach Camilla one year without pay if he might be allowed to have entire control of her studies. She was to follow his instructions in every thing, she was to have no "pieces" and was to give her whole time to her lessons. If, when the year's instruction was finished, the child

really showed a decided genius for the violin it might be well to talk about Paris. If she then exhibited merely a talent for the art, the instruction could be dropped and no harm or serious loss of time would come from it.

This liberal offer was, of course, accepted. M. Simon was a friend, indeed. They could never repay him. It was of no consequence he said. If Camilla proved her genius it would be reward enough to be known as her first teacher.

So it was that the little girl not quite six years of age had her darling wish and took her beloved violin under her arm and trotted off to M. Simon's house at the other side of the city near the beautiful park called the Cours St. Pierre, where she had spent so many pleasant days playing under the trees.

It was a small affair. Her arms and fingers were too short for an instrument of the ordinary size and a little violin costing ten francs ($2) must answer every purpose.

The gossips might talk and quarrel over it in the steep streets of the quaint, sleepy old town. They could say what they pleased. Little did she care. She was going to learn to play the violin. That was happiness enough. Her father was to teach her the elements of music and Felix Simon was to show her how to play.

First she must learn how to stand, how to rest on her left foot with the right partly in front, then how to hold her violin, how it should rest on her shoulder and

how to grasp and support it. Hold it perfectly still for ten minutes. Then lay it down for a few moments' rest. Take it up again and hold it firm. With demure patience she bent her small fingers over the strings as if to touch a chord. Head erect, left arm bent and brought forward so that she could see her elbow under the violin. Stand perfectly still with the right arm hanging down naturally. • Was she to have no bow? No, not yet. She must first learn to sustain the weight of the violin, and accustom her arm to its shape. In silence and motionless she held the instrument for perhaps ten minutes and then laid it down again till she had become rested. This was the first lesson. For two or three weeks she did this and nothing more, and at the end of that time she had acquired sufficient strength to hold the violin with firmness and steadiness.

Great was her delight when Felix Simon said she might take her bow. Now rest it lightly on the strings and draw it down slowly and steadily. Not a sound! What did that mean? Was she not to play? No. There was no rosin on the bow and it slipped over the strings in silence. How could she learn anything on a dumb violin? How make music on such a discouraging thing?

Most children would have given up in despair. Not play at all? Nothing, but positions and dumb motions? That was all. No music; not even finger exercises. Simply, to learn to stand properly, to put the fingers in the right place, and to make the right motions with the

bow. The two hour lesson slipped away quickly, and the little one went home satisfied that she was now really making a good start.

Three times a week she took the long walk through the Rue Voltaire, across the sunny Place Graslin, where the theatre stood, past the handsome stores in the Place Royal, over the little bridge, where the Erdre ran through the town, and then along the narrow Rue d'Orleans till the grey towers of the old Chateau came in sight. Then to M. Simon's, and the lesson on the dumb violin. Not a word of complaint; no asking for "little pieces," after the silly fashion of American children; not even a request for an exercise. With a patience past belief the little one watched, listened, and tried her girlish best to do it right. The violin would become dreadfully heavy. Her poor arms would ache, and her limbs become stiff with standing. M. Simon had a temper, and at times he was particularly cross, and said all sorts of unhappy things to her.

Tears at times, and childish grief over the dreadful weariness in her arms, but with it all not one word of remonstrance or complaint. Felix Simon knew everything. Her father knew what was best.

The violin would swing round to the left, and she would lose sight of her elbow under it. There was nothing to do but to straighten up till the instrument stood in a line with her fat little turned up nose, and that elbow was in sight again. Then, that right wrist! How it did ache with the long, slow motions with the

bow. And her limbs grew stiff with standing in one position till they fairly ached.

If the violin was heavy, she would not mind it, and if she was tired, she would keep her eyes fixed on the strings and see that the bow lay flat and square on them as it went up and down, up and down, from the tip to the handle, over and over, again and again. Whatever happened, she would keep on. She was going to play. This was the way to learn. She would have patience.

At home the same thing was repeated. Three hours practice every day with the dumb violin. And not only every day in the week, Sundays and all, but every week. Three whole months passed away, and then they said she had learned the positions, and the right motions. She could have some rosin on her bow and begin to play. This was progress. She was really getting on. Now she was to have some music. Nothing but the very dullest kinds of exercises; still, it was music, or something like it.

Long sustained notes by the hour. The exercises were all written out with a pen by her master. Nothing but long slow notes. Not very interesting, certainly. She would not have agreed with you. To get a good tone, to make one pure, smooth note was worth the trying for, and she was content.

The bow hardly moved, so slowly did she draw it up and down. The right arm stretched out to the full length, and then slowly back again, while the wrist

bent slowly and gracefully. If she obtained nothing else, she would have a strong, clear tone, and learn to make a grand, full sweep with her bow. Speed and brilliancy would come in good time. Strength, power, and purity of tone were the things worth trying to reach. She would have no feeble, short strokes, but the wide, bold movements of a master hand.

As the weeks grew to months, her fingers and arms gained in power and her child's violin was exchanged for a larger and finer one, to her great joy and satisfaction.

Slowly and patiently she crept along. By day and by night the beloved violin was ever near her. Sometimes in the morning, sometimes late at night, when ever her teacher could find the time, she listened to his instructions and played over the endless exercises. Seven hours practice every day. Three lessons a week; nothing allowed to interfere. Sleep, eat, a little exercise in the open air, practice and lessons, lessons and practice. Such was her young artist life.

The lessons gradually increased in variety and difficulty. Scales in every key, running passages of every imaginable character; and with it all not a single piece, song, or pretty melody of any kind. Ten months of finger exercises; nearly a year of dry scales.

As we have already mentioned, Nantes was very much given to talking about the little Camilla's studies. The men in the orchestra laughed at Felix Simon and Salvatore Urso for their silly experiment with the child.

The idea of a girl playing a violin! It was too absurd! And of all children, that mite of a Camilla; thin, pale, and too small for her age, she was the last one to think of such a thing.

One day a famous violinist, Apollinaire DeKonstki, now the director of the Conservatory of Music, at Warsaw, visited Nantes, and gave a concert at the theatre. Perhaps it would be well to ask him to hear the child play. His opinion might be of great value, and perhaps it would silence the miserable chatter in the town. "Would DeKonstki kindly hear the little one play?" Yes. He would, with pleasure. He intended to give a banquet to some of his friends that evening, and after the opera, and when the supper was over, she might come to his rooms at the Hotel de France. She sat in her usual corner in the orchestra all through the evening, and then, near midnight, with her violin under her arm, she crossed the Place Graslin and called at the Hotel de France. The great artist was sitting in the dining room by the long table where the banquet had been given. There were goblets and champagne glasses on the table, and after talking about her music for a few moments he took a fork, and gently tapping on a wine-glass, asked her what note that was. It was E. And this one? A. And this one? D. The next? A flat. And the next? G. Round the table he marched, fork in hand, striking the glasses and asking their notes. Camilla followed after, and named every tone correctly and without hesitation. He was

greatly pleased with the experiment, and said he would hear her play. "Only, you must mind, I don't like false notes." This was too much, and she replied indignantly "I never give 'em, sir."

He laughed; and then, with demure seriousness, she began to play some of her more difficult exercises from memory. She was a bold and sturdy player, and astonished the master with the graceful sweep of her thin, childish arm. He complimented her in a cordial manner, and hoped she would go on with her studies. "Oh! she would, she would; she meant to study all the time. Some day she would learn to play better still." And then she went home, well pleased that the master had approved of the method of instruction she had pursued. Let the gossips talk. She was on the right road, and she did n't care for them.

This was the only time that Camilla played to any one outside her own family during the first year of her musical life. Many musicians and others asked to hear her, but M. Urso thought it best to refuse them. No one was ever allowed to hear her practice, and her musical progress was kept a profound secret. Naturally enough, this only excited curiosity, and the gossip ran wilder than ever.

Her outward life was unchanged. She appeared regularly at the theatre with her father, and sat by his side through the performance. The other players often teased her, and asked her perplexing questions about the music. What note was that? What key were

they playing in now, and now and now? Every time the music modulated from key to key, she followed it, and named the notes and keys correctly, without hesitation.

Then something happened that made them think it might be well to let her have a piece to play. And such a splendid piece! Not a mere child's song for the violin, or a little dance. Nothing like that. A grand concert piece such as the Masters played. De Beriot's famous "*Seventh air varié.*" A melody with variations, by the great composer De Beriot. To be sure it was not equal to some of the grand works of Haydn or Beethoven, but for those days it was considered a remarkable composition. Since the little Camilla has grown up people have learned more about violin playing, and what was then thought to be a great piece of music would not now be considered as anything very remarkable.

As it was, Camilla thought the piece something quite wonderful, and took it up with the greatest eagerness. Utterly absorbed in her work, knowing little or nothing of what was going on outside her lessons, she studied and practiced day after day without a thought of anything else. The new piece and the exercises took her whole time for the next two months. That one "*air varié*" was in hand every day. She played it through hundreds of times. Every phrase was studied. Hours were spent over one note. A week on a single page was good progress. One little passage cost her many a

sorrowful hour. Somehow she could not get it right for a long time. Once she played it over forty-seven times before her nervous and irritable master would let her off. Other pupils were waiting. They could wait. She was to play that measure just right if it took all day. It was useless to cry. If she was obstinate and naughty about it she should be punished. She must play it right. How her arms ached over that passage. The tears dropped on the violin. It did n't do any good, and only made the master still more angry. At last she did it right, played it over several times, went home and never played it wrong again in her life.

Such was the child's artist life for the first twelve months. Outside of it the gossips fairly raged and warred with their nimble tongues. Salvatore Urso's experiment with his little girl was much talked about. Some could not say too hard things of him. Felix Simon was blamed, her mother was blamed. It was all wrong. It was wicked to teach the child to play. Others said no, let her try, if she failed they would be well punished for their work. If she succeeded it would be a fine thing. It was rumored that the girl had great talent and would in time do wonderful things.

In such a dull, sleepy town as Nantes, where there is nothing in particular going on, and where the people have little or nothing to talk about outside their own petty lives, such an experiment as this was naturally the subject of much talk. It was such a bold step,

and, really, there was nothing else to talk about. Imagine the excitement when it was announced that the little Camilla would give a public performance at the Hotel de Ville.

It came about in this way. The Bassoon in the orchestra died. That was the curious way they expressed it. The instrument had not died, but the man who played it. He left a widow and one child, and no money. Nobody had ever heard of an orchestral player who had left much. The pay was too small for him to save anything, and so the poor widow was left without a franc. Of course, they must give her a benefit concert. M. Urso heard of it, and on talking it over with Felix Simon they decided to prepare Camilla to take part in the charity concert for the benefit of the widow of the Bassoon. So it happened that she took up the "*air varié*" as her first piece.

It takes a long time to do anything in Europe. Here we would decide to give a concert, advertise it, and hire the hall all in the same day, and have it all over within a week. In Nantes it took six weeks to arrange everything, see who would offer to play, and to properly announce the event. This slow and deliberate way of doing things was an advantage to Camilla as it gave her plenty of time to study the piece and to commit it to memory past forgetting.

They collected a grand orchestra. Mdlle. Masson, who was quite a fine artist volunteered to sing, and the

little Camilla would play the famous "*Seventh air varié*" from De Beriot.

The excitement was tremendous. Everybody wanted to go. The Italian opera company, the French opera company, the dramatic company, all the grand families, every musician in town, bought tickets. There was not a seat or standing place in the Hotel de Ville to be had, and the Bassoon's widow received a most remarkable benefit. All the friends of the Urso family were there to encourage the child, and all her father's enemies were on hand ready to laugh at her failure.

She was expected to fail. She might be able to struggle through the piece without really breaking down, but of course she would stand awkwardly, handle her bow like a stick, and do everything else that was bad and inelegant. They might assert that she would play like an artist—she could not do it. And so they waited to see Salvatore Urso's silly experiment come to a wretched end.

How amiable in them! We can forgive them. There was nothing else to talk about in Nantes, and it was certainly a very bold thing to bring out the six year old girl in this public manner. She must be a truly wonderful child, or her father and teacher had quite lost their heads.

The concert began and went on very much as concerts do everywhere. The orchestra played and the artists sang, and then there was a little rustle and hush of expectation as they brought in a box or platform for

the child to stand upon so that all could see her. The piano was rolled out into a convenient place, and then the slight, blue eyed girl, gay in a white dress, white satin shoes, and a pink sash, appeared. They placed the dot of a child, violin in hand, upon the raised platform before them all. Felix Simon, with trembling fingers, sat down to the piano to play the accompaniment. Her father stood near to turn the leaves of the music book, though he was so nervous and excited he hardly knew what he was about. In the audience sat her aunt Caroline, surrounded by a few of her friends, and all of them in no enviable frame of mind. Her mother was too nervous and excited to appear, and remained in the ante-room.

As for Camilla, she was absorbed in that remarkable pink sash and those satin shoes. There was never anything quite so fine, and she did hope all the people noticed how very becoming they were. That they were really watching her, never entered her head. With perfect self-possession she put the violin to her shoulder, and stood ready to play. No awkwardness, no fear, no attempt at display; a simple girl, with a girl's manners. The critics admitted to themselves that she knew how to hold her instrument, and could handle her bow with a certain amount of grace. But, then, that was to be expected. Could she play?

There was not much doubt of it. The tone came, strong, full, and true. The notes came in exact time, and with precision and certainty. The people were

hushed to a painful silence, as the child went steadily on with the work. M. Simon was breathless with excitement, and her father hardly knew where he was. In his haste, he turned two leaves of the music-book at once. What a dreadful disaster! It was all over now. She would break down at once, if the accompaniment should falter.

Not much danger; for she quietly turned her head, and in a hurried, lisping, whisper said: "You've turned two pages, papa."

The whole house heard every word, and a smile spread over the company. Little did she care. She went straight on; not a note lost, not a break or a sign of hesitation. The page was turned back without a pause, and the music went on.

This piece of music begins with an introduction in *adagio*. The opening bars are smooth and graceful, and then the melody becomes more difficult, and moves in sixths and thirds. It ends in a brilliant *cadenza*, that leads to the theme in *moderato* time. This part is not very difficult in rythm, and is bright and pleasing in character. The first variation is *poco piu lento*, and at once demands great skill to execute its difficult running movements. The second variation is still more difficult, and abounds in rapid scales and open chords. The third variation is in G, and in *adagio* time, and is full of trills and abrupt changes from high to low notes. A long *cadenza* leads to the last movement in *moderato* time and in the key of E.

It finally ends in an *allegro coda* that abounds in brilliant and difficult writing.

What a dreadful uproar they did make over the child. It seemed as if they never would stop clapping and cheering. She could not go, but must stay and bow in a demure fashion, that was perfectly captivating. They did not expect her to play the piece again. That was not the custom in Nantes. M. Sollie, the leader of the orchestra, in the name of all the musicians, offered to crown her young head with a wreath of white camelias. The attempt was amusing, and they all laughed and cheered again. The wreath was too big, or she was too small, and it slipped over her head and shoulders, and fell to the floor, and there she stood in the middle of it.

Some enthusiastic ladies presented her with a tiny ring for her finger, and a handsome bracelet; and more wonderful than all, they brought out a magnificent Paris doll, in a big white box, and set her quite wild with joy by presenting it to her. With the doll under one arm, and her precious violin under the other, she bowed her thanks from the middle of the wreath. Then they cheered again, and laughed, and offered her flowers. She was taken down from the platform and led away, but they had her back again three times, doll, violin, and all. Altogether, it was a very remarkable experience for father, mother, teacher, and wonderful little girl.

Perhaps you think this overdrawn. This is a true

story. Here is an extract from one of the newspapers of Nantes, that only says the same thing:

——"Never had violinist a *pose* more exact, firmer, and, at the same time, perfectly easy; never was bow guided with greater precision, than by this little Urso, whose delivery made all the mothers smile. Listen, now, to the Air Variee of the celebrated Beriot; under these fingers, which are yet often busied with dressing a doll, the instrument gives out a purity and sweetness of tone, with an expression most remarkable. Every light and shade is observed, and all the intentions of the composer faithfully rendered. Here comes more energetic passages, the feeble child will find strength necessary, and the voice of the instrument assumes a fullness of tone which one could not look for in the diminutive violin. Effects of double stopping, staccato, rapid appeggios—everything is executed with the same precision, the same purity, the same grace. Repeatedly nterrupted by applause and acclamations, she was saluted at the end by salvos of bravos and a shower of bouquets."

As for the anti-Urso party, they were completely demoralized and had not a word to say. Camilla was a success, and they gracefully retired from the field.

CHAPTER III.

THE DAY BEGINS.

The next morning Camilla trotted off to Felix Simon's just as if nothing had happened. The Ursos were too sensible to be upset by vanity. The triumph of their child only caused them to soberly consider what was to be done next. Camilla must lose no time. The lessons must go on precisely as before and until matters were properly arranged her life would be unchanged. She must prepare for more difficult tasks. Having proved her skill she must now improve it. Greater tests and severer trials were in store for her. She must go to Paris. She must enter the Conservatory of Music. But how, and when?

Long and earnestly they talked over the matter and laid their plans as best they could. M. Urso was a fine flute player. Of course, he could readily obtain a place in some theatre in Paris. Camilla's mother was a charming singer and a good teacher. She could give lessons, and perhaps sing in some church. Oh! and then there was the organ! Certainly so fine an organist as M. Urso would soon get a good place with a

comfortable salary. Aunt Caroline must go too. She would keep house and help the children. None of them had ever been to Paris, but the prospect seemed brilliant and for Camilla's sake they ought to go as soon as possible. Having decided to move they sold all their furniture, collected whatever was due for music lessons and salaries and prepared for the flitting.

Camilla, her father and aunt Caroline were to go first. The baby brother was too young to bear the journey, and when they were comfortably settled in Paris, mother could follow them. The journey was a slow one. It was mid-summer, and on the road came the news that the cholera was raging in Paris. It would not do to enter the city till cooler weather came. So they tarried at Tours for six weeks till the sickness abated.

The Conservatory of Music stood at the corner of the Rue Faubourg—Poissonière and the Rue Bergère in the old part of the city of Paris. They must take rooms as near it as possible so that Camilla would not have too far to walk on stormy days. With all their hopeful prospects and though they had quite a large sum of ready money in hand they took simple quarters in a house on the Rue St. Nicholas d' Antin.

As soon as they were comfortably settled Salvatore Urso went to the conservatory to ask if the little Camilla might be admitted as a pupil.

The Director Auber, received him politely and asked what he wanted. "Could Camilla enter the Conservatory?" The little shrivelled up gentleman opened his

small eyes as wide as he could and said, in a squeaking voice, "Camilla! That's a girl!" Yes. Camilla was a girl. How very shocking in her. Why was she not a boy? A girl. Oh! No it couldn't be considered for a moment. A girl enter the great Conservatory of Music! Such a thing had never been heard of in the whole history of the world. The Conservatory was not for girls and they couldn't be admitted.

This was discouraging and M. Urso retired from the interview not knowing what to do next. The idea that the great composer Auber would utterly refuse to take the child had never entered his head. Of course, with her undoubted genius the Conservatory would be proud to teach her. What difference did it make if she did happen to be a girl?

It made a great deal of difference to the worthy officers of the Conservatory. Not one of them would consider her case. The Secretary, De Beauchesne was applied to with more success, but he was only one of the officers and he could do nothing alone. He heard Camilla play and did everything he could for her. He visited the family and was in every way a friend. When Camilla's third brother, Salvatore, was born, he stood Godfather to the child, so we may infer that he was quite intimate at the Ursos'.

It would not do to give it up so. Day after day slipped past, the time grew to weeks and still the doors of the Conservatory were fast closed against the child. M. Urso called on Auber several times. Would he not interest himself in the child? Would he only hear her

play? No. It was useless. She was a girl. She could not enter. Why had M Urso been so foolish as to come to Paris when he might have known that they never took in girls. Besides, she was not old enough. Not even a boy could enter under ten.

People of influence were consulted, and in vain. If the Directors of the Conservatory would not take the child it was no affair of theirs. They could do nothing about it. It did seem as if everything was against her and she began to realize what a very unhappy thing it is to be a girl. Still, she would not despair nor relax one effort to obtain her darling wish. She would keep on studying just the same and all through the weary weeks of waiting she practiced and studied as best she could under her father's instruction.

The Winter passed away and the Spring came. It brought very little hope with it. Camilla could not enter the Conservatory. There were only nine places and there were seventy-six applicants and every one of them boys. When they grew up they could play in the theatres. That was the aim of their lives. The Conservatory was opened to teach them, to prepare them for this very work. Camilla would not play in an orchestra and, of course, she would be of no use to the country and it was idle to admit her to the classes.

Persistance finally carried the day. M. Urso fairly worried the learned officers of the Conservatory into a consent. The irritable little Director, Auber, lost his

temper and said "Well, bring the girl. She is sure to fail. We will hear her play, but she cannot enter."

The Ursos were greatly pleased with this concession. If they would hear Camilla just once it would be enough. They could hardly refuse to take a child of her great talents even if she did have the misfortune to be a girl.

At last the eventful day arrived. The seventy-six boys and the one girl were to be examined. Her case was quite hopeless, they said. She might play like an angel and it would avail nothing. The boys would have the places.

She never lost her courage, but with that quiet, serious manner that only served to hide her sturdy character, she took her father's hand and soberly trotted through the streets without a fear. She knew what she could do, she had her piece by heart; she meant to break into that Conservatory, it was her only hope and she would try hard to do her very, very best.

M. Urso was excited and nervous. How would it all end? Would Camilla be admitted. It was doubtful, still, her genius might win the day in spite of the determined opposition that was raised against her. As for Camilla she clung to her violin in stubborn silence, and patiently waited for the great trial. All the candidates met in one room, the seventy-six boys and their friends and the one girl with her father.

All the names were numbered and the numbers placed in a box and shaken up. Then, some one drew

them out, one at a time, and called off the numbers. Camilla's number was nine, so her turn came quite early in the day. This was fortunate, for she was fresh and eager to begin and the jury had not become weary with their task. One at a time the boys were admitted to the presence of the grand jury. Big fellows, fourteen and fifteen years old, who had played before she was born. The case really looked discouraging and desperate. Would she ever get in? She was only seven, and looked hardly six. Her fingers were thin and her face pale. She hardly seemed fitted to compete with grown up lads, It did not deter her from trying, and when her number was called she felt sure she would do her best.

They led her into a room where eight solemn looking men sat in big green-backed chairs round a large table. Each had an inkstand and pen and paper and every one had a look of severe dignity that was positively appalling. There was the little Auber, the Director, Rossini the great composer looking fat and grand in his impressive wig, Carraffa the celebrated composer, Allard the violinist and four others looking equally wise and solemn.

They placed her before the double quartette of players who were to give the accompaniment and prepared to hear her work. She would try the *andante* and *finale* from the *Fourth Concerto*, by Rode with accompaniment for violin, second, viola, and violincello.

Here was her one grand chance. She must do her

very best, stand just right, and remember everything Felix Simon had said. Her father and mother depended upon her.

The double quartette began to play and she forgot everything save the music. The solemn judges never spoke, nor made a sign in any way expressive of pleasure or disappointment. Some of them scratched their pens over the paper through it all. Others looked straight at her in a severe manner that was perfectly dreadful.

At last it was over. The eight gentlemen never smiled or uttered a word or gave even a look that seemed like hope. She couldn't guess whether she had failed or won. Somebody led her back to her father in the room where the seventy and six boys were still waiting the result of the trial.

Those men looked so black and really it was all so grim and solemn that she was depressed and discouraged and for six long hours she sat in the room by her father waiting for the verdict to be pronounced. It was eleven o'clock in the morning when her turn came and it was not till five in the afternoon when the last boy had been heard.

There was a tremendous excitement when the Janitor came out to read the names of the nine successful ones. Every one sat perfectly still while the names were pronounced. First a boy's name. She expected that and was resigned. Then another boy's name was given. It began to be discouraging. Then one more

boy's name. Her chances were slipping away. She would not be taken in. One more boy's name. There were murmurs of disappointment from the crowd. Half the names gone. Poor Camilla was ready to cry with disappointment.

Just here Allard, one of the jury passed through the room and stopping a moment said to Camilla's father:

"The little Urso is admitted."

Nobody could believe it! There was some mistake! That mite of a girl taken in? The four remaining names given by the Janitor were hardly heard in the uproar and confusion that broke out. The boys who had failed and even their friends were for mobbing the child. It was dreadful, an outrage, perfectly unheard of, a shame, and all that. What right had a girl to come and take the place away from some good boy who could undoubtedly play much better? M. Urso had used influence with the jury and done many wicked things to bring about this unheard of result.

M. Urso threw up his hat in the air, behaved in a wild and happy manner and gave no heed to the taunts of the people. He gave Camilla a ten franc gold piece and conducted himself in a startling and peculiar fashion generally that would have astonished his friends had they seen him. As for Camilla her mind was absorbed in that gold piece. She had never seen anything quite so magnificent. Here were riches, indeed, and she didn't care a pin for the silly boys who stormed and roared about her. What a noise they did make

over it! "Stupid boys, they couldn't play, and that was the reason they were so mad about it." She must go home and show her prize to her aunt. How glad her mother would be to hear of her success. Hugging her violin close she paid no attention to the rude people in the room and silently suffered her father to lead her away.

It was a happy day for the Ursos. To think that the little one had fairly broken down the bars of the Conservatory and compelled them to take her in by the simple strength of her genius. Soon after her mother joined them from Nantes and the reunited family was indeed a happy one.

Since that time several girls have been admitted to the Paris Conservatory, but they have to thank Camilla, the youngest of them all, for clearing the way.

Now she began to think that all the weary months with the dumb violin, the long hours of practice, the days and nights spent with dear, cross, old Felix Simon were happily rewarded. With all the elation and pride of her parents she seemed only to be glad, in a quiet way, that she could now go on and learn more and more.

Many weeks must pass before the long summer vacation would be over and the Fall term of the school begin. In the meantime not a day was lost. Three or four hours practice every morning with her father, a walk after dinner, and then two hours more practice. No pieces. Nothing but exercises in long, slow notes

to keep up the strong, pure tone, and scales in every key.

There is nothing so successful as success. Just as the vacation was nearly over the little Camilla had another most flattering offer of instruction. De Beriot, whose music she had played at the concert at Nantes, visited Paris and gave several concerts. While he was in the city M. Urso called upon him and asked permission to bring Camilla to his room. Yes. He would gladly hear her play. This was certainly a great favor and soon after she went to his hotel and played some of his music to him. He was greatly pleased with the child and at once offered to take her to Brussels where he lived, and give her a complete musical education at his own expense. He was at that time the first teacher of the violin at the Conservatory of music at Brussels, a place that is now filled by Vieuxtemps, and he was certainly a master of the violin. He would do this freely if he might have entire control of her education. She was not to appear in public till he was quite ready. It might not be for many years. To be sure, in three years, by the time she was ten, she would be a wonderful player, but by waiting longer she would become one of the few great violinists of the world.

This was indeed generous. They were thankful and would be delighted to place her under his instruction if they could go too, and be near her all the time. They had no means of supporting her in another city.

She could not leave father and mother. They already found it difficult to get along. Paris seemed very different from their anticipations. It was hard to decline such a splendid offer, but it was harder to part with Camilla, and she could not go.

Then came the Conservatory. There were several teachers of the violin. She might have the choice, and decided to go into Lambert Massart's class. He was the most popular teacher. He was known to be cross and irritable. His pupils had a sorry time of it but they generally became good artists. She meant to be an artist and she would go to him. It was fortunate, for as soon as he heard her play and learned something of her history and circumstances, he generously offered to give her private lessons at his own house without money and without price.

"Heaven helps those who help themselves." Salvatore Urso saw his store of money melting away fast. It was not easy to find a place in the orchestras in Paris. There was not a church in the city that did not have several applicants waiting for the position of organist. Evil days were beginning to come upon them. Nearly nine months had slipped away and Camilla had only just succeeded in entering the Conservatory. For all that, she had entered and her talents had won a good friend in the great teacher Massart. They had no noble patron to aid them, there was no wealthy friend to help them along. Everything depended upon themselves and Camilla. She, brave little girl had done

well and could now go on and fulfill her splendid destiny.

Her first lesson at the Conservatory opened her eyes to the life that was before her. There were eight boys in Massart's class besides herself. At first the boys sneered at her and resented her presence. Not content with this they tried to annoy her with rudeness and to plague her with boyish pranks. She took it all patiently, replied to nothing and clung to her violin in stubborn silence.

Massart was a large, rosy faced man with an uncertain temper. He seemed much younger than he really was, and though at times he was dreadfully cross and savage, he was at heart a kind and generous man. His manner of teaching was peculiar. One pupil played at a time and the rest looked on in silence while the master walked up and down the room with a long slender stick in his hand. At first she thought it was a baton to beat time with or to point to the music. Presently she found it had quite another use. One stupid boy did not take the proper position. Massart told him how to stand and the boy put his feet in the right place. Presently he changed one foot and down come the stick with a snap on the boy's legs. "Oh! M. Massart that hurt" cried the boy. "I meant it should, said he. Do it right next time."

If, thought Camilla, that is the way, I'll remember it. Somehow it was not so easy. Massart gave a direction once and then came the stick. They must

do it right once and for all. Before she knew it there was a slap on her own limbs. It didn't hurt much because her skirts warded off the blow. As for the boys they had to take it sharp and heavy.

Then that little finger on her right hand. It would spring up as she moved the bow. Massart said very pleasantly that she must keep it down. She put it down but presently it flew up again and then came a stinging blow from the slender stick that was not so pleasant.

That poor little finger had a sorry time of it before it would lay down properly. Many a time it ached with the blows of the switch, and once she thought it was certainly broken. She was obliged to nurse it in a cot for two days. At last it came just right and has never gone wrong since.

Some days Massart was in a terrible passion and stormed up and down the room, and the stick danced about the boys legs till the little Camilla felt sore all over, out of pure sympathy. It made her very cautious and careful and as a natural result she escaped much of the shower of blows that the master offered so freely. One day a stupid boy persisted in holding his violin wrong and suddenly it flew up to the ceiling in a hundred fragments. Poor Camilla fairly cried with fright when the master kicked it out of the pupil's hands and really had to take refuge in sudden tears. She clung to her instrument with might and main after that. He would not be able to kick it away in that style from her hands.

Up early in the morning, breakfast, then three hours practice at home with her father, then to her lessons from two till four at the Conservatory. Then home again to study till bed time. Such was her day.

Three times a week, at all sorts of hours, as happened to be convenient, she went to Massart's house for the extra lessons he gave her as a private pupil. He was a famous teacher and pupils gladly paid him twenty francs an hour for instruction on the violin. Camilla had it all for nothing. It was the only gift she ever did have. Nobody had ever given her money. They gave her an education and that was worth more than money. She must work hard and show that she appreciated the master's kindness.

Besides these lessons, she studied harmony and practiced solfeggio at the Conservatory. Her every hour was taken up with something. When her fingers were weary with playing she could write out her exercises in harmony.

So the days and weeks slipped away. Busy over her studies she hardly noticed that the winter had come again till she began to need warmer clothing. She went to aunt Caroline. Mother was busy on some embroidery. It was strange how much time mother gave to that work now. She had not done so at Nantes. Aunt Caroline gave her an old dress that had been mended several times. Camilla put it on without remark. She thought it odd, that there was no new dress for the winter but said nothing. Somehow things

seemed to be changed. Her father was discouraged and her mother never went out, and worked hard all day at embroidery. What had happened? She could not tell.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WOLF GROWLS.

It was a busy life for Camilla. As the winter advanced her hours of study increased. More practice at home and more difficult lessons at the school. Studies from Rode, Baillot, Fiorillo, Viotti, Kreutzer, Sporha and the great masters of the violin, were taken up in turn. It was designed that she should become acquainted with all the master works of the day. In addition to regular studies in scales, finger exercises and the like, she went through all the works of the masters that she might become familiar with their style and learn to appreciate the best art. There were no trifling songs, no silly pieces designed to show how fast she could scrabble through a great many notes. Nothing of this kind allowed. Solid work, grand concertos, sonatas and solos passed under her hand in review and in an artistic atmosphere, she began to grow to the stature of an artist while only a child.

The boys in the class soon laid aside their rude manners and forgot their jealousy in admiration. Massart

laughed at them and said: "Fie! Boys! The hen is beating the roosters." Much truth was hidden in the master's pleasantry. Camilla was rapidly distancing them all. She was the favorite scholar. She had the advantage of Massart's private instruction three times a week and exhibited an aptitude for the work that advanced her quickly to the head of the class. This was an honor, for it must be remembered, that these boys had been selected as the cream of all the candidates. Each had displayed marked talent for the violin. Had it been otherwise they would not have been in the Conservatory.

All were like Camilla, quite poor. Some were even supported by pensions from their native towns, and nearly all of them afterwards became good players. There was Lacham, Leon Regniér, and Isidor Lotto who afterwards became so famous, and several others.

Henri Wieniawski was in the class before Camilla, but at the time was still about the school. They often met and there began a friendship that has continued to this day. Of Massart's pupils, three, Camilla, Lotto and Wieniawski have become famous the world over and are among the great artists now living.

Besides her regular studies Massart advised Camilla to join a quartette in order to perfect herself in reading music at sight. Once a week she spent an hour or two in playing with three others at the Conservatory and in this way heard much fine music and accustomed her

young eyes to read the notes quickly and taught her slender fingers to interpret the music at command.

Not all of her days were happy. Massart was dreadfully cross at times. He would detect the slightest flaw in the work. Once he marched a stupid boy out of the room by the ear and told him never to come back again. If she should be treated like that it would really break her heart. She would try her best to attend to all that was said and to do everything just right. Massart might storm and rage about the room, but it should not be from any neglect on her part. Altogether it was not a very lovely life. Try as hard as she could it did not always please, and some days it was really pretty tough for such a very small girl.

Another trouble came. Mother would bend over that dreadful embroidery all day long, and things did not seem so prosperous as in Nantes. Father was busy looking about for new rooms and almost before Camilla was aware of it they were ready for a change of residence.

They could not afford the rent of the rooms on the Rue St. Nicholas d' Antin, and they found cheaper quarters in a flat just under the roof in an old house on the Rue Lamartine, and up six flights of long, dark stairs.

It was a sad change from their comfortable home in sunny Nantes. There was nothing to be seen out of the windows save steep, red roofs, the sky, and sundry

wild cats that roamed over the tiles. The streets thereabouts were narrow and crooked, with mean little sidewalks hardly wide enough for one.

It was not the Paris of to-day. The wide and handsome Rue de La Fayette that now passes near the Rue Lamartine and the beautiful Square Montholon with its trees and gardens was not in existence then. Camilla first knew Paris as a city of short, crowded streets lined with tall houses and cheap shops and crowded with work people and small householders.

They had only been settled in the new home a few weeks when a greater trouble came to them. The wolf began to growl in the echoing entry way of the tall house. They began to think he would climb the stairs or come in over the tiles and scare even the starved cats away.

The store of money they had brought from dear, old Nantes had melted away long ago. There was "little to earn and many to keep." M. Urso tried and tried, but could get no permanent position at any of the theatres. There were scores of flute players in the city. As for organists, there were a dozen for every organ. Once in a while he had a chance to play for a single Sunday, as a substitute. Occasionally there was a party or other gathering where a few francs could be earned by playing.

Even mother had to help. At Nantes she had spent many a happy hour in fancy needle-work and embroidery. In Paris the work was followed for twelve hours

a day that she might earn two francs and so help keep that terrible wolf from coming up the stairs. Aunt Caroline kept house and made the children's clothing go as far as possible. All helped as well as they could. They must stay in Paris. Camilla must keep on at the Conservatory. There were two years more of study before her. She had put her hand to the plow and could not turn back. They must all stay and help her through.

The Winter passed away and the Spring came. Absorbed in her studies Camilla hardly noticed it except to observe that her thin clothing was more comfortable. It cost less to live in the Summer, and when in June her ninth birth-day came and she was eight years old, they became more hopeful. Perhaps they could pull through after all.

It was in vain. With the Summer came the dull times in business and their case grew more and more desperate. There was no wealthy friend near to help them. No grand Prince stood ready to pay the bills, after the fashion of the good Prince who helped the young Haydn on in his studies. They had not a single rich friend in the world.

Camilla might get on very well through the warm weather with her present suit. But, to study or practice she must have good food and plenty of it. She looked pale and pinched enough, poor child, and her dress was too small for comfort. Something must be done or they would all starve. They must take her away from the Conservatory or find more money.

In their distress they applied to Massart and the officers of the Conservatory. The master was very angry. "What! Go away for six months! Give concerts! It was a shame to lose so much time just when she was doing so well."

No. If Camilla left the Conservatory she could not come back. That is what they said. And so it was all over and this was the wretched end of all their trying. It was hard to give up. What could they do? The Summer term was almost over. The summer vacation was at hand. Camilla might give a few concerts during the vacation. The money might help them along another winter and then they would be in want again. The vacation would not give them time to accomplish all they wished. They hoped by making an extended tour to earn enough money to support them a year or more.

It was the only thing to be done and after making proper representation to the authorities of the Conservatory permission was given. Camilla might be absent six months and then resume her place in the classes. This was a great concession. Only Camilla's undoubted genius, her desire to study, and her poverty caused them to break over their rules in this matter. Massart too, gave his consent and said he would resume her instruction without charge when she returned.

Now she was to prove what she could do. It was a pity to interrupt her studies. Her education was not

half finished and she must appear in public before she was really ready. If she succeeded now, how great would be her triumph when the three years at the Conservatory were finished.

It was impossible to break up the family, and the entire household prepared for the expedition. As they had no money they must move slowly and cautiously. Salvator Urso would play the flute and accompany Camilla on the piano. Her mother could sing. That would make three performers, and with two pieces for each they could give quite a programme. To make a variety they should have one more singer. So they hired a gentleman to join their Company and sing buffo and other songs. Aunt Caroline would stay in Paris with the boys. When all was ready Camilla and her father and mother packed up and started off in search of fame and money. They must do something, and this seemed the most feasible plan.

The first journey was a short one and they landed at the town of Verdun. As soon as they were comfortably settled in lodgings Camilla and her father started out to present their letters of introduction. These letters were to wealthy amateurs who might be interested in the child and her playing.

The good people received them politely and after they had made a short call they were formally invited to call soon and spend the evening with a few musical friends. This was all that was wanted. If the ladies and gentlemen once heard Camilla play they would be

pleased and perhaps they would take tickets to her concert. Things move slowly in France and several days, perhaps a week, would pass before the musical party would come off. In the mean time Camilla lost not an hour. From six to ten hours a day she went through her exercises and studied such pieces as she intended to perform in public. Her father was constantly with her, guiding her studies, overlooking her practice and aiding her in every way possible.

When the important evening came her long, brown hair was braided in two long braids and secured with bows of blue ribbon. With her new frock and simple manners, large blue eyes and thin, pale face she presented an interesting appearance. A little too quiet and sober for such a young girl. She seldom spoke, and was reserved and thoughtful. Her life had not been a very happy one. Had it not been for her intense love for music, had her heart not been bound up in her violin it would have been a sad, dull life, full of toil and wearisome labor. In after years, when the showers that fell so steadily during her younger days, cleared away, the bright, animated and merry side of her nature came out and the demure little girl became a vivacious and sparkling woman.

It was small wonder that the two or three hundred people who met to hear her play were delighted. She seemed so earnest, her large eyed intensity of expression, the bold and striking method of playing, the masterly sweep of her bow captivated and charmed them

all. She gave such pieces from memory as she thought most pleasing and then after some little conversation about her music they asked if she would give a concert in Verdun. Yes, in a few days. Would they not take some tickets? Oh! with the greatest pleasure. They would all attend and bring their friends. Were the tickets ready? Yes. Her father had them. So they crowded round her father and bought some ten, some twenty, some fifty, and some a hundred. So most of the tickets were taken at once and success was secured in advance.

To American eyes this seems a strange fashion. The idea of playing at a private house and then selling the tickets strikes us as peculiar and perhaps unpleasant.

The Ursos did not think so. It was the custom of the country. It is the custom now. All the great players and singers have taken just such steps as this and it seems quite proper and so no one thinks ill of them.

Then she took her violin again. Felix Simon knew what he was about in Nantes. Massart's instructions had not been thrown away. Camilla was an artist in little. If she had not the expression and feeling that comes with maturity, her playing was brilliant, strong and powerful. The tones were pure and steady and technical difficulties seemed to be of no consequence. She went through it all without effort and as easily and gracefully as can be imagined.

The audience was charmed with her simple manners and her wonderful playing. They fairly overwhelmed

her with endearments and attentions. Was there any thing they could do to gratify such a dear little girl? One offered her one thing, another something else. She had a delightful lunch with her new friends and at last went home laden with bon bons and presents.

Then she must give a concert. They would ask all their friends and really it would be quite a grand affair. Of course all this took time. There was the permission of the Mayor to be obtained, and the hall to be engaged, the tickets to be prepared, and posters and advertisements to be sent out and tickets to be sold among the rich families of the town.

Her father must attend to it all. There was no one to help and he had to attend to everything.

In a few days the concert came off at one of the small halls in the town. There was "a good house," as they say. Camilla played the violin while her father played the accompaniment on the piano. Her mother sang and the buffo singer gave some of his songs. The great attraction was the pale little one with the long braids. How she raced through the rapid passages and drew her wonderful bow with a great sweep that made the tones roll out full and grand. Then those strange, airy harmonies made by pressing one finger firmly on a string to give one note and then lightly touching the same string a fifth above so that the lower note was partially obscured by the note above it. Double stopping they call it. We know it as harmonics. With either name it is difficult enough for even a man's hand. It was small wonder that the people

cheered and cried bravo! bravo! and threw flowers on the stage and actually filled her arms with comfits and bon bons. Verdun was a great place for sugared sweets and candied fruits and they thought they were doing quite the proper thing by presenting some to her.

The next day they counted the money, paid all the few small bills and found that they had four hundred francs left. Really! Things were looking up. Their prospects were improving. Camilla was certainly a great success. Collecting such letters of introduction as they could obtain, they packed up and started for the next town on their programme. Where was the wolf now? Nobody knew. Camilla had driven him away with her violin.

CHAPTER V.

A GOOD FIGHT.

Then a short journey to Bar le Duc. As soon as they were comfortably settled in the new place the whole ceremony was repeated. The good friends they had found at Verdun gave them letters of introduction to the best people and in about three weeks they had made their calls, played at some of the grand houses and given a concert with the same interesting result in the way of good, sound francs. How they treasured up the little Camilla's winnings. Every franc must be saved and they lived as cheaply and simply as possible at all times. Every centime would be needed to carry Camilla through the two more years at the Conservatory.

Then to Metz and Strasburg and to the Rhine. It was to be a grand tour. The Germans must hear Camilla play. They were true lovers of music. If they were pleased it would be a great triumph and the concerts would be very successful. From Strasburg they went to Manheim, then up the Rhine to Bale in Switzerland. Then back again to Baden Baden, and to Heidelberg.

What a glorious time she had. There were rides and walks among the beautiful hills just as the grapes were ripe. Her spirits became more animated and childlike and her color returned. It was like some strange dream. Mother, too was happier, and as for father he had never been so gay and merry since they left Nantes. How that pile of francs had grown. From hundreds it had become thousands.

At Heidelberg she had a ride on the donkeys and visited the ruined castle high on the hill. It seemed a kind of continual picnic. It was no longer a weariness to practice. The weeks flew away so happily that they hardly noticed that the Fall was near. They must return to Paris soon. The vacation was over long ago. Still, the handsome pile of francs was not large enough yet, and they kept on to Calsrue and Homburg. Every where it was the same. Presents of every imaginable kind, flowers and jewelry were showered upon her. At one place they gave her more preserves and sugared fruits than she could eat in a month, and a German Countess at Manheim was so charmed with the child that she took off a beautiful pearl cross and chain and put it round Camilla's neck. It was the cross the lady had when she was confirmed at Church and she valued it highly on that account. Camilla kept the beautiful present for a long time till it was lost in New York, as we shall see later in the story.

The tour was really not a very extensive one. A

part of Eastern France and a part of the Rhine country was all she saw, but it took seven long months to get through with it. Were she to undertake the tour now it could be done in two weeks. They had no active agent traveling ahead to hire the halls and secure the rooms at the hotels. There were no advertising facilities, and no telegraphs. M. Urso had to do everything himself. The ceremonious calls upon the great families took a great deal of time. The subscription list and the sale of tickets could not be started till they were fairly settled in the town. Three weeks in one city was hardly enough time to prepare for one concert and during it all Camilla's practice could not be neglected for a single day. Her father was always present watching and guiding her, and, in fact keeping her steadily to her work.

To off-set all this, it cost them very little to live, and their concert expenses were light. The rent of the halls was low, and they had very few advertising bills to pay. This made it easy to make the tour profitable, and when at last they returned to Paris they found they had 5,000 franes on hand, more money than they had ever dreamed about in sleepy old Nantes. This represented Camilla's first earnings. Aunt Caroline had received part of the money to help along the little home in the Rue Lamartine and when they came back she stood ready to welcome them at the top of the six flights of stairs. The cats were all there on the red roofs, but that wolf had run away in dismay. It is

thought he did not appreciate music. Camilla was sure he did not like her style of bowing.

The very next day after the journey was over Camilla returned to the little room in the corner of the Conservatory and took her place by the window that looked out into the court-yard where the school bell hung in its tower, where she could see fat and rosy Massart tramp up and down the floor and scold the boys in his dear, cross old fashion. That stick flourished about as lively as ever. Her own fingers and limbs felt it once in a while when she became careless. It was not often now. She would be nine next Spring. She was getting to be a big girl and knew too much to be caught napping by Massart. The "German Tour" as she proudly called it had sharpened her wits and made her even more attentive and careful. She took up her studies in solfeggio and harmony and settled down into the routine of hard, persistent study with renewed vigor. Those boys were far ahead of her. Never mind. She would catch them presently.

When we see Madam Urso play to-day we think her steadiness of posture and grace of playing very easy. None can count the days, months and years of trial and labor she spent to attain such skill and grace. In playing it may be noticed that she stands very firm and erect on her left foot, with the right slightly advanced in front. Even so simple a matter as this cost weeks of painful effort and many a bitter tear. They put her right foot into a china saucer in such a way that

the slightest weight upon it would crush it. She broke several before she fully acquired the proper position. It cost tears and china ware, at first. Now it is as nothing.

The playing appears to be easy enough to spectators. Her fingers fly over the strings with unerring certainty. It seems as if it would be impossible to go wrong. We look on the strings to see if there are finger prints, or other marks to show where the strings should be touched. There is nothing. On the piano each key is plainly marked out. Knowing the notes and the keys we may in time touch them with absolute certainty. On the violin, the fingers must find the right place without assistance. The notes must be found, as it were, in the dark. Only by learning just how far to stretch the fingers and by the employment of years and years of practice can any degree of skill be obtained.

In spite of all this, here was our nine year old Camilla getting ready to compete for the prizes at the end of her second year. It was not to be a mere concert where each pupil was to come out and play such pieces as they liked before a mixed audience. There was a long difficult concerto, to be learned, and each was to play the same piece before the severe and critical jury, and before such musicians and others as chose to attend. It was held in the theatre attached to the Conservatory. Besides that, there were three difficult questions to answer in harmony, and a piece of music written in a most extraordinary manner was to be sung at first sight.

In this country we now write vocal music in two clefs, known as the bass and treble clefs. This makes it easy to read and any singer after having mastered them both can get along without much difficulty. Some of the more lazy ones think it hard to sing in even one and are quite upset if they try to sing in any, save their own. What would the poor alto who "didn't know anything about the bass clefs" think of singing at first sight in seven different clefs. Camilla's trial piece at the examination in solfeggio was a song that began in one clef, went a few bars and then jumped into another, then into another and back again, then another and so on in a manner perfectly bewildering and distracting. She had never seen it before and went through it without missing a note. The result was that she carried off the first diploma, and the jury and audience were greatly pleased.

Then they placed a large basket before her in which were hundreds of bits of folded paper. She was to take out three, open them, read them aloud and give a verbal answer to each. The first question was something about the relative minor of a certain major key and its signature. That was easy enough and she answered at once without hesitation. The next question nearly took her breath away. It was some deep and perplexing thing about the construction of a chord. Many a music teacher would be puzzled to answer it. She thought some wicked person had put it in the basket just to annoy her. Nobody could answer such a

tremendously hard question. She paused perplexed. It would not do to fail, and calling up her sturdy will she compelled herself to think it out. In a moment a bright gleam passed over her face and she began to answer the question slowly. Feeling more confident, she went on explaining the matter, and suddenly went wrong. She caught herself at once and in a flash corrected it and gave the right answer.

This was against the rules. No pupil was allowed to correct himself. He must have it right the first time. She was greatly frightened, and thought she had made a failure. She was so earnest and anxious over it, and moreover she was a girl, the first girl on the violin ever admitted to the Conservatory, and with a smile and a word of encouragement the jury forgave her and accepted her answer. The third question was quickly answered and the great trial was successfully finished. This trial of skill, or examination as we should call it, lasted several days. One day she was examined in harmony. The singing came another day, the violin concerto another, and the playing at sight in a string quartette on still another. The poor girl was quite worn out and thankful that the summer vacation came soon after. At our Conservatories and music schools the pupils take the vacation as a time of rest and enjoyment. They say it is too hot to work. It is quite as warm in Paris, and Camilla was as weary as ever they could be at such a time. Still she rose with the sun, practiced all the forenoon with her father,

went to Massart's house three times a week, and with the exception of the hours spent at the Conservatory, her time passed exactly as if there was no vacation at all. Work, work, work, all the time. Just enough exercise to keep her in good health. Only a little play, now and then. Hours and hours of practice day after day. Such was her life. A great and splendid reward was in view. By and by she would win every thing. When her day of success came she could rest and enjoy herself. Could she? Did she ever rest? We shall see.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROSE OF MONTHOLON.

The last year at the Conservatory was drawing to an end. It was early summer and Camilla was just ten years old. The long and difficult course of study that many a boy was proud to finish when he was nineteen, was almost over before she had entered her teens. She was paler and thiner than ever and felt glad the warm weather had come, for really, her frock was not thick enough for comfort. That terrible wolf had again howled in the dark echoing entry way of the house on the Rue Lamartine. The goodly pile of francs she had won on the German tour had melted wholly away. Mother had taken up that dreary embroidery again. There were four boys to be clothed and fed now, and Salvatore Urso found it hard work to get along.

Camilla absorbed in her music hardly knew how serious the case had become. Many a time she came home from her lessons to find that the family had been

to dinner, and that something nice and warm had been saved for her. They said they had dined, but in truth they had only eaten a cheap lunch of fried potatoes or something a few sous would buy that Camilla might have a better dinner. She must be maintained in good health, and no sacrifice on their part was too great. When they had but little they took the best for her and concealed from her their own scanty meals. She was an exceedingly affectionate child and would have shared her best with her mother had she known what they silently suffered for her sake.

Her father was constantly with her when she practiced. Many an hour he stood by her side and held her left arm to help sustain the weight of her weary violin. At times he let her sit on a stool though the good student always stands with the violin. She was a growing girl and something of the rules must be relaxed. At the same time her father was a strict master and never suffered her to slight or neglect her practice. During the three years at the Conservatory he never was absent while she practiced though it averaged ten hours a day during the last year. During it all Camilla never once refused to go to her lessons and in company with her aunt or father daily walked to the Conservatory and to Massart's house.

Could they go on much longer? Their case was getting positively desperate. They had nearly struggled through the three years. It was almost over and Camilla was well nigh ready to try her fortune in the

world. She must play before some of the wealthy amateur musicians and show her talents. No money would come of it but it might serve as an introduction to public life and bring her into notice so that when she did leave the Conservatory she would not be wholly unknown.

One day there came an invitation to spend the evening at some private house and she prepared to go. She had passably good clothing and was, as far as appearance was concerned, ready to go. Then came a dreadful discovery. The wolf was at the door. He had come up the stairs and was scratching and snarling at the threshold. What were they to do? There was not a thing to eat in the house. The very last franc had been spent. There was nothing left but that pearl cross the Countess had given her at Manhiem. They might sell it. No they could not and would not. They would go supperless to bed first. But Camilla, poor child, was going out. Perhaps she would have a supper at the friend's house where she was to play. And perhaps not. Besides, she had eaten nothing since morning. She might faint before the supper hour came. She could not give it up and go to bed as her brothers had done. In their perplexity and trouble Aunt Caroline came with the joyful news that she had found a sou in an old coat pocket. Only a sou—a copper cent. Camilla dressed hastily, and with her father set out for the private concert where she was to play. As they walked through the streets they stopped

at one of the little cooking stands that are so common in Paris. With the one cent they bought a paper bag holding perhaps a pint of fried potatoes. M. Urso carried the violin and Camilla took the bag and ate her supper as she passed along. Franklin's breakfast of rolls in the streets of Philadelphia was a royal feast beside Camilla's supper. Using her handkerchief for a napkin she finished the meal and throwing the paper bag away entered the grand mansion as the honored little guest and artist. As for her father he had no supper at all.

It is always darkest just before dawn. They struggled through a few more days of bitter poverty and then came a sudden burst of wealth and good fortune that fairly took their breath away. It seemed as if a shower of gold actually rained down upon them and a new and most remarkable experience came in the history of the Urso family.

The last term at the Conservatory was nearly finished. She must give her whole energies to her studies. The Directors had given out the piece of music that was to be played by the pupils at the examination in July and she must go to work upon it. Eight weeks was little enough time to give to such a piece of music. It was the 24th Concerto in B Minor for violin by Viotto. Besides being a work of great difficulty it began with one short note followed by a longer one. They must all get that place right, if nothing else. The jury would not forgive them if they slighted the first note in

the piece. How they did try over that one passage. The two notes echoed from every room in the Conservatory all day long. The boys tried it over at every spare moment and it did seem to Camilla as if those were the only notes in the piece. For herself she practiced it carefully and very slowly, feeling sure it was better to trust to her own coolness and steadiness at the trial than to go over it so many times as to become too confident.

About a year before this a man, who said he came from America, had appeared at the Conservatory to see Massart in relation to some music lessons he wished given to his sons. For convenience we will call this man the American. He is now dead and as his share in this story is not the most happy this title may take the place of his real name. His two sons played the violin and the father wished them placed under Massart's instruction. Camilla came in during the interview and quietly waited till it was over. The two boys played for the master and Camilla sat near by in silence. Then Massart asked her to play. She did so and the American was so much pleased that he asked her name and residence. A day or two after that he called upon Camilla's father and proposed to him that Camilla should visit the United States as soon as her lessons were finished at the Conservatory. He thought she would attract great attention there and offered to take her to America on a concert tour. This was all very fine but Camilla could not go now and so the matter

was dropped. When the term was over there would be time enough to talk about it. So the American went away and the Ursos thought no more about it.

Suddenly in the Summer of the last year and just before the term was finished he reappeared and repeated his offer to take Camilla to America. She was to go with him for three years and was to play at concerts in all the principal cities of the country.

In consideration of which he would pay M. Urso the sum of thirty thousand francs the first year, sixty thousand francs the second year and one hundred thousand francs the third year. Traveling and hotel expenses for three people were to be paid and altogether it was a flattering offer.

Thirty thousand francs in one year! It was too wonderful! They had never dreamed of so much money! Sixty thousand francs! A hundred thousand francs! Such sums were too vast to be taken in at one sitting. They must consider the matter. After much discussion it was at last arranged that when her lessons at the Conservatory were finished Camilla and her father should start for America.

During the last Spring in Paris they changed their residence and moved into more cheerful and comfortable rooms on the Rue Montholon, a street that makes a continuation of the Rue Lamartine. Here they had front rooms in the attic and in the sixth story. There was a broad balcony at the foot of the steep mansard roof and here Camilla's mother arranged a pretty row

of plants in pots so that the iron railing in front was half hid by flowers. Poor as they were they always managed to have it as bright and pretty about them as possible. With all their poverty they always contrived to look neat and pleasant. M. Urso arranged a temporary shed on the balcony for a kitchen and here in the bright sunshine high up in the air above the noisy street Camilla used to watch the birds and the clouds and peep through the geranium leaves down into the street so far below. This change of scene was a great advantage to her. It brightened her spirits and gave her thin cheeks a bit of color. As she went through the streets with her violin, and gay in a new chip hat and blue ribbon the people turned to look at the demure eyes and the half smilling mouth and said: "She is the Rose of Montholon."

The Rose could not be suffered to bloom alone in the alley-ways and lanes of the old city and invitations to play at the houses of some the grand families came in. One of these was to the residence of Madam Armengo and another was the residence of Napoleon then known as the Prince President. At Madam Armengo's Camilla attracted great attention and won many friends. Her playing was a surprise to all and the company could hardly find words to express their pleasure and admiration.

Then came an invitation from the Prince President to take part at a grand concert at the Palace de Elysée before the Prince and the great dignitaries of the

court. There were Generals and Marshals, Princesses and grand Court ladies, artists and gentlemen with decorations and many other notables. A place on the programme was assigned to the little Rose of Montholon and in her usual simple and natural manner she played her best before the honorable company. They paid her the best of attention and she quickly captured all their hearts by her childish manners and wonderful playing. They had never heard any such playing from one so young and they crowded around her to thank her and congratulate her upon her skill.

The Prince Napoleon came and spoke to her, praised her music and asked what she intended to do next. Go to America. Ah! No. That was not right. Such talent as hers must not leave France. M Urso replied that the contract had already been signed with the American and they must go with him.

" Puisqu 'il en est ainsi, dépéchez vous à aller gagner de l' argent, et revenez vite en France. A votre retour ne manquez pas de venir me voir."

These were the very words of the Prince in reply. They thanked him heartily and then the party broke up and they went back to their home on the Rue Montholon.

Then came the final examination at the Conservatory. It did not differ materially from the one described before except that it was much more difficult. The questions in harmony were more searching. The piece of music to be sung at first sight was more

perplexing than ever before and the new quartette for strings in which she was to take the first violin far exceeded the others in technical difficulties. Each day of the trial was a triumph for her. She received the first prize and never were a family more pleased with the success of a child. It was a great day for the Ursos and it seemed as if all their labor and sacrifice was to be splendidly rewarded. Camilla had never faultered through it all, and now that it was over the three years of study seemed as nothing. It had been a hard struggle but she did not care. It was happily over and soon she would go to America and gratify her father by winning a great store of money. Then she would return to Paris and to dear old Massart. In spite of his severe discipline he was a good man at heart and she loved him dearly. She owed everything to him and she could never half pay him for his generosity in helping her in her days of poverty. He was very unwilling to part with his favorite pupil and wanted her to stay in Paris and continue her lessons. It would cost her nothing. He would be only too glad to teach her. It could not be. She must fulfill her contract with the American.

America. Where was it? So far, so far away. Would she ever come back from such a distant country? It seemed in those days a very serious undertaking and their friends could hardly believe them when they said they were going to New York.

The Director Auber was also very sorry to part with

her and kindly wrote a letter of introduction for her. The following is a copy :—

PARIS, August 12th, 1852.

"Mademoiselle Camilla Urso is a young pupil of the National Conservatory of Music. Although still at a very tender age, she has obtained brilliant success at several concerts in Paris, and above all at the Conservatory, where the jury have decreed to her by election the first prize at the competition for the prizes of the year.

"Learning that she is soon to depart for the United States, I am delighted to state the happy qualities which ought to ensure a noble artistic career.

"The Americans have already nobly proved that they are not only just appreciators of the fine arts, especially of music, but that they know as well how to recompense with generosity the merits of the celebrated artists who are heard in the hospitable towns of their rich and beautiful country."

AUBER.

Member of the Institute and Director of the Conservatory."

Finally everything was arranged. Aunt Caroline was to go with Camilla while her mother was to remain in Paris with the boys. The three years would soon be over and then they would all be reunited and could live happily together once more.

The American was liberal in everything. He supplied them with money for their outfit, and it really seemed as if their days of trial and poverty were at an end. There was nothing to do, but to accept and enjoy the great reward that had crowned their exertions.

The new dresses, the parting with dear old Massart and the anticipation of the voyage absorbed Camilla's thoughts, and the sailing day arrived almost too soon. The trunks were packed and the carriage came to the door. It was a sad parting for fond mother and affectionate little girl. She cried bitterly and would hardly consent to leave her mother's arms. As the carriage drove away she looked back up at the lofty balcony where the geraniums put their red eyes through the railing and watched her mother's handkerchief fluttering so high in the air till a turn in the crooked street shut her dear home from view. Two weeks later, on the 15th of September, a little girl, her father and aunt and a violin landed from the Steamship Humboldt in New York and a new life began for Camilla.

It was like a dream. They couldn't believe it, nor understand it. It seemed as if they lived in a palace. They had three parlors furnished in the most costly and elegant style. There were yellow satin chairs in one room and blue in the next. Obsequious servants waited upon their every want. Camilla's room looked out on Broadway and the view from the window afforded her unending amusement. She hardly dared to sit in the satin chairs. They were almost too fine for use. Such splendor and luxury was really oppressive. And the people! What a strange language they spoke. She was sure she could never understand it. She listened and tried and only succeeded in pronouncing the

name of the hotel which she gave as the "Ir-ving House."

The first few days they gave themselves up to sight seeing. The American called frequently and said that the first concert would come off very soon. He had advertised it extensively and the whole troupe must prepare for the great event. In the meantime they must be prepared to receive company, for the authorities would soon call upon them. This they thought would be quite proper and they felt sure they would receive the dignitaries of the city with becoming respect.

In order to give a proper variety to Camilla's concerts other talent had been engaged. Oscar Comettant and his wife had been invited by the American to join the troupe. He was to assist as accompanist and his wife was to sing. There was also a M. Fetlinger a buffo singer. This enabled them to present with Camilla's assistance the best of programmes.

While they were thus waiting at the Irving House for their first concert, the whole party M. and Madam Comettant, M. Urso, Camilla, and Aunt Caroline all went out to walk one bright sunny morning. As they strolled through the streets they suddenly came to a dead wall where in gorgeous letters six feet high was printed the startling announcement: —

"CAMILLA URSO HAS ARRIVED."

They all stopped and gazed with feelings of wonder and awe, upon this remarkable sentence.

Oscar Comettant was the only one who could translate it and when he had done so they all repeated it over to themselves. As for Camilla she committed it to memory as the first sentence she had ever spoken in English. They returned to the Irving House remarking to themselves that America was truly a wonderful country. The intelligent natives appreciated music. They welcomed artists in a truly royal manner, and published their names in letters six feet high. While they were talking over the matter the American suddenly came in. He seemed greatly excited over something. Was the Mayor coming? Were the authorities coming to visit them? Should they dress for company?

Ah! No! Something had happend. He was very sorry—but—his partner—who supplied the money, etc. had—failed?

Failed! What did he mean! Failed?

No money?

No, not a dollar left!

They couldn't believe it. Were they to give no concert? Was not Camilla going to play? Was the grand scheme a failure?

Yes. It was all over. Everything had failed.

The whole party was utterly stupified and hadn't a word to say. What should they do? Where were

they to go ? The disaster was too great for comprehension. They hardly knew what to say much less what to do. The American could do nothing. He had not a dollar in the world.

CHAPTER VII.

"CAMILLA URSO HAS ARRIVED."

What were they to do next? They could not speak a word of English and had not a dollar. They would gladly return to France could they manage the tickets. It was impossible. Something must be done. A concert or two must be given. Camilla would surely succeed if she had a hearing. The American must not desert them utterly. He might, at least, act as their business agent and assist them in giving a few concerts.

They could repeat the plan that they had tried with such success in Germany. Camilla might play before some of the wealthy families and then give a concert. It did not meet their expectations. The customs of the country were different, and though she visited Commodore Stevens, then living at Hoboken, and played for him, nothing came of it. He was greatly pleased with the child and on taking her to a jeweler's bid her select such a ring as she fancied. A ring with a variety of stones, a sentiment ring, took her girlish eyes and she chose it in preference to a more costly one.

And that was all that came of it. Her visit did not lead to a concert and their fortunes seemed as desperate as ever. M. Urso went everywhere among his countrymen and told his story and endeavored to find a chance for Camilla to play. He could not give a concert on his own responsibility. Some artist must be found to bring Camilla out before the American public.

Fortunately, Madam Alboni was in New York about this time and through her kindness an opportunity was found for Camilla. Three concerts were arranged in which Camilla might make her bow before the American people. Child violinists were not unknown in New York. Paul Julian had played in the city and had attracted much attention. The announcement that a new child-artist—a girl and a violinist would appear only roused curiosity and people were eager to see how she compared with the boy Julian. They called her Camilla—Camilla Urso. Who was she? Where did she come from? No one seemed to know. Madam Alboni was to bring her out. The child must have some talent to be patronized by such an artist as Madam Alboni.

Only ten years of age. Certainly a marvelous child. And a girl. It must be a sight worth seeing. They would all go to the concert. In this shallow style did the people of New York talk. They looked upon her as some kind of natural wonder, or curiosity. That she might have an artist's soul, that her playing might

be something more than mere display did not seem to enter their comprehension.

In due time the concert came off and a slender, blue eyed girl hardly four feet high appeared and played a fantasia or themes from Somnambula. They had expected she would play fairly well, they looked for tolerable skill. What they did see and hear so far exceeded their expectations that they could not find words to express their admiration.

The steady position, the vigor and grace of her bowing, the strong, firm tone, and more than all the wonderful delicacy and lightness of her touch. The splendid technical ability, and her simple manners, the demure and serious eyes and the slight, girlish figure, these captured their hearts and won their respect.

The concert was a great success and Camilla in a single night established her reputation in the United States. This was her first real step in her artist life. She here laid the foundation of her reputation, a reputation that was first American and afterwards European.

The next morning the New York Herald gave her the first newspaper notice she ever received in this country.

"Little Camilla Urso, the wonderful child violinist, divided honors with the prima donna. Of the same age and country as Paul Julian, whose masterly performance on the violin attracted so much attention here, this new candidate for public favor promises to be a powerful competetor with him. Her execution of

the fantasia or Somnambula was most admirable and drew down vociferous calls for an encore which were honored. Several bouquets were thrown to her on the stage and the greatest enthuasiasm was manifested in respect to the marvelous little artist."

Then some one suggested that they try Boston. That city was a musical centre and Camilla would be sure to meet with a good reception there. Accordingly under the guidance of the American the entire party went to Boston. Mr. Jonas Chickering, the piano-forte manufacturer kindly welcomed her and invited her to call at his residence on Boylston street, two doors from the building now occupied by the Art Club. So much pleased was he with her simple manners and her wonderful playing that he opened his elegant warerooms and invited a select company of musical people to hear her play. This private concert first brought Camilla before us. She had, as it were, come before us. Hitherto, it had been a strange story that had been told to us. We could now see and hear for ourselves.

The Boston Transcript and Dwight's Journal of Music, then our best authorities upon art matters thus spoke of this occasion :—

"Her violin playing is not that of a child,—even a remarkable child—but that of an *artiste* cultivated and accomplished. Her bowing is extremely graceful and free, her execution neat and clear, her intonation perfect."

Dwight's Journal of Oct. 9th says ;—

"Little Camilla Urso, the violinist, but eleven years

old, announced a concert at the Masonic Temple for last evening, just too late for notice in this paper. But we had the pleasure,—and a choice one it was—of hearing her the other evening in a company of some forty invited guests, in Mr. Chickering's saloon. Her playing is not only truly wonderful, but wonderfully true;—true in style, expression, feeling, as it is true in intonation and all mechanical respects. She played Artot's *Souvenirs de Bellini*, and never have we listened to a long fantasia of several themes, worked up in all manner of variations, with a purer pleasure. It was masterly; the firm and graceful bowing, the rich, pure, refined tone, the light and shade, the easy control of *arpeggio*, *staccato*, *double stops*, etc., were all such as we could only have expected from the maturest masters we have heard. We could scarcely credit our own eyes and ears.

The little maiden is plain, with strong arms and hands enlarged by practice of her instrument; yet her appearance is most interesting; a face full of intellectual and sedate expression, a large forehead wearing the 'pale cast of thought' etc. Pity only that such fine life must be lived out so fast, and always in the blaze of too much sun for plants so young and tender!"

Then followed two concerts at the Masonic Temple. Concerning her playing at these concerts we may quote from Dwight's Journal of October 16th.

Camilla Urso. "Two concerts have confirmed all we have said of this wonderful girl violinist. Two concerts, attended by an intelligent, nay, an exacting, audience delighted almost to tears—and yet not money enough in the house to pay expenses! Indifference to flaming advertisements of pecocity is well; but it is *not* well, not worthy of the taste of Boston thus to neglect one of the finest manifestations of genius that ever

seemed to come to us so straight from heaven. It was one of the most beautiful, most touching experiences of our whole musical life, to see and hear that charming little maiden, so natural and childlike, so full of sentiment and thought, so selfposesed and graceful in her whole bearing and in her every motion, handle her instrument there like a master, drawing forth tones of purest and most feeling quality ; with an infallible truth of intonation, unattained by many an orchestra leader ; reproducing perfectly, as if by the hearts own direct magnetic agency, an entire Concerto of Viotti or De Beriot, wooing forth the gentler melodies with a fine caressing delicacy and giving out strong passages in chords with ever thrilling grandeur."

The first of these concerts was on the 8th and the second on the 12th of the month. Neither was successful and evil days again came upon them. The concert company broke up and each looked out for himself as best he could. As for Camilla she returned to New York with her father and aunt and they settled down in poor and miserable quarters in a house on Howard street—the Rue Lamartine of New York.

Her reception in Boston had not been a pleasant one. There seemed to be a prejudice against her. The good people could not quite forgive her for being a girl. It was well for Paul Julian—he was a boy. Camilla's appearance disturbed their nice sense of propriety. This is only the more remarkable when we come to see that later in her life Boston became her second home. It was here that she afterwards laid the foundation for her reputation and here she won her

greatest triumphs. Since, she has played in our city over two hundred times and here her greatest and latest artistic efforts have been made. Little did she think as she left the city that she should afterwards enter it twice under most peculiar circumstances and afterwards make it the home of her girlhood and sometimes her residence in womanhood.

Heaven helps those who try to help themselves. It was useless to cry or sit down in dispair. Camilla at once resumed her practice under her father's guidance. The violin was taken out again and the wretched alleyways about Howard street reechoed with the strains of the marvelous instrument. By the hour the music floated out the dismal chamber window where the wonder-child toiled over the seemingly hopeless task. The thin, pale face bent over the music book all the day long. Practice, practice, practice. Life seemed made for that.

What was the good of it all? It had only brought them poverty and sorrow. Not for a moment did she pause. The art was reward enough without the money. She would wait.

It happened just at this time that Paul Julian, not in the most happy financial circumstances came to New York and for a week lived in the same humble boarding house with the Ursos. Camilla's room was up stairs and Paul's just under it. Both practiced incessantly, and Camilla's father while attending to her lessons would often say:—

"Hear that boy! He loves to practice."

Paul's father in the room below would bid the boy stop and listen to the girl artist overhead and say:—

"Hear that girl! See how she loves to practice."

When the lesson hour was over the two children met on the stairs or on the sidewalk for their brief play hour and would exchange notes concerning their two fathers.

"Was your father cross to-day?"

"Yes. Cross as a bear!"

"So was mine."

Camilla did not remain in obscurity and poverty long. Archbishop Hughes heard of her and arranged a charity concert in which she was invited to appear. The concert was for the benefit of the Catholic Orphan Asylum and as Camilla had contributed largely to its success a share of the proceeds were given to her father. This fortunately saved them from immediate want and in a few days after a still greater piece of luck came to them. A letter came from Philadelphia inviting Camilla to play at a concert given by the Philharmonic society of that city. She at once went to Philadelphia in company with her father and aunt and there received one hundred and fifty dollars for a single performance on her violin. This was the largest sum she had ever received at one time and it seemed as if their day of small things was nearly over.

While they were in Philadelphia an agent of the Germania Musical Society of Boston visited them and

invited Camilla to join the Society in a series of concerts that they proposed to give in the New England cities. A handsome salary was offered and they all three started once more for Boston.

They took rooms at the United States Hotel and prepared for a long stay. Camilla's return and reappearance in our streets was not happy. They arrived on Saturday and the next day having nothing in particular to do Camilla took aunt Caroline's hand and they went out for a little walk. The streets, so strangely quiet in their foreign eyes, seemed dull and they walked on thinking they might come to some garden or pleasure ground where the people would be listening to a band, drinking coffee and making merry in a proper manner.

They could not find the place. The stores were all closed and it seemed very stupid and gloomy. They would return to their hotel. It was down this street No. It was that way. Which way was it? The streets were so very crooked that really they were quite lost.

They stoped a gentleman and said as best they could—"Unated Statis Hotel?" He did not seem to understand and passed on. Then they tried a lady and repeated the words "Unated Statis Hotel?" The lady talked about something but they could not understand a single word. Again and again they stoped people on the walk and repeated the strange words. Every one shook his head or talked rapidly about

things they could not understand and not one could show the way to the " Unated Statis Hotel."

Poor Camilla began to cry with the cold and they were having a sorry time of it. They met an Irish servant girl going home from church. They repeated the words to her and the quick witted girl soon led them back a few steps and showed them the great brick block with its gilded sign " United States Hotel."

Now it was that we became familiar with Camilla's face in our streets. Her black felt hat and long dark green plume that was at once so singular and so very becoming, her big blue eyes with the sly twinkle in them, the smiling mouth and sweet tempered expression of her face won unusual attention and admiration. Children in the streets said "there goes Camilla Urso," and ran after her to see the pretty French girl who had come to live among us. Traditions of her girlhood days are still treasured up in many Boston families and pleasant stories are told of this part of her life. She here grew in mind and stature and she was no longer little Camilla but Mademoiselle Camilla Urso.

The first concert with the Germanias was given on the evening of December 11th, and from that time there was a brief space of financial happiness for our young Mademoiselle. For several months she had more leisure than she had ever known in her short life. Their headquarters were in Boston and the tours were short and easy.

There seemed to be no immediate prospect of returning to France and something must be done about

Mademoiselle's English education. The family made their home at the United States Hotel and during the intervals between the short concert trips a private tutor came to their rooms to instruct her young ladyship in the language of the country. Nothing had been done even in French and she found herself wofully ignorant for a ten year old girl. It made very little difference for she took up the matter with enthusiasm and learned to read in an incredably short time. Within three months she could express herself with tolerable ease in English and learned to read almost anything that was put before her either in French or English. How it happened she could hardly explain. It must have been the intuitive grasping of a mind prematurely active and retentive. She could read music as easily as a Boston girl of her age could read the daily papers, and it did not seem to her in any sense difficult to understand the much more simple alphabet of spoken language. She had only one objection to her tutor. He helped her over the hard words and all that and was not cross but as she confided to her aunt, "he was very disagreeable—she didn't like him for he chewed—and it wasn't pleasant."

At the same time such a demure puss, with such proper notions about manners was not above joining some of the other girls in grand romps in the corridors of the hotel, nor afraid to join them in the glorious mischief of changing all the boots put out at the doors of the rooms and then listen at the top of the stairs at the fine uproar caused by their pranks.

It was during this residence in Boston that Camilla was confirmed at Church and she passed the allotted weeks of preparation at the Convent of Notre Dame at Roxbury. Her father thought it a sad loss of time on account of her violin practice, but for Camilla it was a period of unalloyed happiness. She was the pet of the school, and her simple, childlike nature bloomed out freely in the quiet atmosphere of the place. Here for the first time she learned to use her needle. Pen, needles, pen-knife and scissors had been carefully kept out of her hands for fear of possible injury to her fingers and yet she learned to sew quite well in a very few lessons. It was merely a mechanical operation and it came to her in a flash. She astonished the good sisters with her feats of embroidery and fine sewing and they could not understand how such an one could learn so quickly. The manual skill of playing and the quick eye in reading music had probably much to do with it. The weeks at the convent were like a charming oasis in the dry and dusty plain of her public life and she came out of the school blooming with health and happiness.

On the 4th of April, 1853, the Germanias started out on an extended tour through the Western States and with them went Mademoiselle Camilla, her father and aunt. It was upon this trip that Camilla Urso's face became familiar to the people of this country. She had visited nearly every important city and town in New England and now she played in every large

city through the Northern and Western States. She went as far west as St. Louis and as far south as the Ohio. It was a stiring, eventful life. Traveling constantly, playing four or five times a week, meeting new friends every day, practicing steadily and growing in mind and stature she seemed to have found the desire of her young heart. Finally the trip ended at Rochester, New York, on the 11th of June, and the company separated. The Germanias went to Newport for their summer campaign and the Ursos returned to New York.

Madam Henrietta Sontag was at this time traveling in this country. She had given a series of very successful operatic performances in Boston and New York during the Winter and Spring, and proposed to make a concert tour through the West and South during the Fall and Winter. M. Urso while in New York received a letter from her agent inviting Camilla to join the troupe. Accordingly she set out with her father and met Madam Sontag's party at Cincinnati. Aunt Caroline traveled with them as far as Louisville, Ky. Madam Sontag, who was greatly pleased with Camilla here offered to have a motherly eye over her and accordingly her aunt returned to New York and only M. Urso remained to be guide and helper to our young Mademoiselle.

For Camilla this trip was a season of great happiness. She was earning money rapidly, her mother in far away Paris could share in the golden store and her father was pleased and satisfied

Madam Sontag became a second mother to Camilla and treated her with the utmost kindness. Every day Camilla must come to her room to practice and receive instructions in singing. Camilla's instrument was the violin. She could sing with more than ordinary skill and in perfecting her phrasing and in improving her style in vocal music Madam Sontag insensibly improved her violin music. All of Camilla's music was examined by the great singer and in those stray hours picked up between the demand of concerts and travel much of art and happiness was enjoyed.

Camilla was the favorite of the entire company. There was Pozzolini, the tenor, fat Badially, the bass, jolly Rocco the buffo singer and Alfred Jael the rising young pianist, merriest of them all. With each Camilla was a pet. Every one seemed ready to please the young girl and in their society life passed happily. Freed from anxiety and the excessive and wearisome practice her nature expanded and she began to show that sweet and amiable character that so brightens her maturer years.

Giving concerts at every city the party took their triumphant way down the Ohio and Mississippi to New Orleans. The brilliant concerts, the strange people, the mighty river, the life on the palatial steamboats, the perpetual change of scene awoke Camilla's fancy and imagination and developed her character rapidly. The publicity, the glare and the excitement only brought out her intellectual and artistic power. Most

young people would have been upset and spoiled by vanity. Her young days in the orchestra at Nantes had accustomed her to public life, and the povery and trial she had gone through served as good ballast to keep her steady when riding on the topmost wave of success.

The tour ended at New Orleans with even greater triumphs. Camilla appeared eighteen times in company with Madam Sontag and each concert was a perfect success in every sense.

Then in a moment the bright dream came to an end. Madam Sontag and her opera company set out for Mexico, leaving Camilla and her father in New Orleans. She would return soon and in the mean time Camilla could wait and by study and practice prepare for a new tour through the Northern States in the Spring.

In a few weeks came the dreadful news that the good and amiable woman, and the great *artist* was dead. She had died after a brief illness in the city of Mexico and all of Camilla's hopes were destroyed. Again she was without employment and without money. Her father was not distinguished for sound financial ability. He was too generous and liberal, and in spite of the large sums of gold that had been paid to him on Camilla's account he found himself in actual distress at the breaking up of the Sontag combination. With reasonable prudence they could have saved enough to enable them to retreat to the more prosperous field in

the Northern States. As it was Camilla was obliged to begin again, and slowly, and painfully win her way back alone to the North and to happier days. An agent was found to take her through the Southern cities and thence by the way of the seaboard to New York. It was not a happy trip. There was no longer a great singer to attract attention, there was no obedient and skillful business man traveling ahead to prepare the way and secure hotel comforts and financial success.

Camilla's violin was the only attraction, and to fill out the programme they were obliged to call in the aid of such local talent as they could find in the various cities they visited. Mobile, Savannah, Charleston, and other places were visited and after a slow and disagreeable journey they arrived in Baltimore in the Spring of 1855 almost without a cent.

Here came a singular episode in Camilla's life that will illustrate the perfection of her schooling at the Conservatory of music at Paris. A gentleman and a public singer heard of Camilla's difficulties and arranged a concert for her benefit. At this concert Camilla for the first and only time laid aside her violin and appeared as a singer. No one had thought of her in this character and her duet from the opera of L' elisir 'd Amore, by Donizetti, was a great surprise. She exhibited a fine, clear voice almost as well trained as her fingers. The performance only showed how thorough had been her instruction in solfeggio at the Conservatory. Every true artist is a singer. No matter what

his or her instrument may be, no matter how skillful their fingers may be with bow or keys, singing must form a part of their education. This is the theory of Camilla's study in music. The practice of solfeggio gives clearness and accuracy to the ear, and teaches the eye to read with certainty and speed. Much of her understanding of music has come from such practice and it should form a part of every musician's education.

Finally father and daughter reached New York after an absence of nearly nine months, and almost as poor as when they started. The Summer season was at hand and there was very little opportunity for concerts. In company with her father she then went to Canada and there traveled from place to place giving occasional concerts and everywhere winning many friends. Invitations to visit the homes of private families came to them freely and for Camilla the trip was a very happy one. So happy indeed that she was unwilling to leave her new friends even when the news of her mother's arrival in New York was received. M. Urso went on to receive his wife, but Camilla persisted in staying where she was. She was the admired and sought after young girl. Every one seemed ready to offer her every pleasure and attention and she was far from willing to return to the life of concert giving and practice.

Concerning the music that Mademoiselle Urso played at this time, we may mention a few of the pieces usually given at her concerts. They give us not only an idea of her musical ability, but serve to illustrate the

character of the concert pieces in vogue at that time. No musical life would be complete, even if it is that of a "wonder-child" without some information concerning the actual work performed. Mademoiselle Urso was not in any sense limited in her range of pieces. She did not have a mere stock set that she always played. She could and did play everything that had been printed for the violin. In her girlhood's concerts she chose those most popular without much regard to their actual position in the art. She had not then reached her true artist-life and was not, as now, in a position to lead the public taste into the higher fields of classic music. She played then such pieces as the *Violin Concerto*, by *Viotti*, *Alard's Souvenir* the *Daughter of the Regiment*, *Souvenir de Gretry*, *Souvenir de Mozart*, by *Leonard*, and the *Tremolo*, by *De Beriot*. She also gave at times the *Witches' Dance*, by *Paginini* and *La Melancholie*, by *Prune*.

After some delay Camilla joined her father and mother at New York, and the family were once more reunited. It was at this time that they had the misfortune to have their rooms entered, and all the presents, including the pearl cross that Camilla had received on that almost forgotten German tour, were stolen.

The family were not united long. In the Fall Mrs. Macready, the reader, invited Camilla to join her troupe on a tour through the West. As mother and daughter had been separated for a long time Madam Urso

traveled with Camilla a portion of this journey. Unfortunately Madam Urso was taken sick at Cincinnati and for a while Camilla traveled alone with Mrs. Macready. This tour was quite a successful one for Camilla and it finally ended in Nashville, Tenn., where the party separated.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

INTO EACH LIFE SOME RAIN MUST FALL.

At the close of her tour with Mrs. Macready in 1855 Mademoiselle Urso left the concert stage, gave up playing in public and retired to private life in Nashville, Tenn., only appearing at occasional charity concerts. Seven years later, in the Autumn of 1862, she returned to New York prepared to resume her artist-life. The musical world remembered with respect and admiration the Camilla Urso of her brilliant girlhood. The wonderful child-life had ended. The new artist-life now begins. Once more the swift fingers might fly over the mystic strings. Again the bow arm wield its magic wand.

Could they? Would the art come back after seven years of almost total neglect? Would the woman fulfill the promise of the child? She could not tell. It seemed a life-time since she had played in public. It was a doubtful experiment. She would not hesitate nor be afraid. She would try again.

"Father, I have come home."

Father, mother, daughter and dear aunt once more reunited. It was an humble home in the midst of the great city. It was home and that was enough.

"What now, my daughter?"

"Music, father. My violin. Give it me once more."

Once more the violin is placed on the young shoulder and the bow is laid with caressing touch upon the beloved strings. Ten and often fifteen hours a day incessant practice. No rigid Massart to watch every note. No father to sit by to guide and help. Alone with her violin. She would have no master now. She would be her own master. Her genius should be her guide.

Again the long, slow notes. Again the patient finger exercises. From the almost forgotten years she recalled the lessons of the Conservatory and the instructions of dear old Felix Simon, at sunny Nantes. He was at hand and lived in New York. He might help her. No, she did not wish it. She refused even her father's aid. She knew herself now. Times had changed since those old days in Nantes. Music had changed. Violin playing had changed. She could not tell exactly how or why, but she felt sure it must be so. If she was to succeed she must come up with the level of the age. The standard of musical taste had changed during the seven years of blank in her artist life. The playing of the "wonder-child" would no longer please the public, much less herself. If her music was then

remarkable for a child it must now be equally remarkable for a woman. No half way halting, no inferior work. She had no longer the excuse of being a child. She must win her own place alone and unaided.

Thus thinking, hoping and toiling incessantly she spent the weeks, and then the toil become a pleasure and the hope fruition. To her surprise and joy it all came back. And with it came something else. A new discovery in her art. Her violin had a new voice. A wonderful something was in its every tone. What was it? The brilliant sparkle and fire of her girlhood-music was all there. Everything had returned and with it had come a lovely spirit born of love and sorrow. She loved her violin. She had known grief. Both lived in her music

Three months of hard study and then she felt ready to once more try her fortune. The fame of her return had quickly spread, and early in 1863 a letter arrived from Carl Zerrahn the conductor of the Philharmonic Society in Boston, inviting her to play before the Society in our city. She accepted the invitation and once more stood before us, violin in hand, and surrounded by hosts of kind and true friends ready to welcome her back again.

Here begins the new artist-life in our own city and at her childhood's second home where she had won such honors as a girl. Her first appearance was at the Music Hall on the 14th of February, and on this occasion she played the *Fantasie Caprice* by *Vieuxtemps* and

the *Andante et Rondo Russe* by *De Beriot.*

On the 21st she played again and gave the *Souvenir de Mozart* by *Alard* and the *Cappicco* on themes from *Fille du Regiment.*

On the 2d of March she played a *Fantasie sur Lucrezia Borgia* by *Stanton*, the *Souvenir des Pryrenees* by *Alard*, a *Duet* from *William Tell*, for violin and piano and repeated the *Vieuxtemps Fantasie caprice.*

Immediately after this she was called to New York to play at the Philharmonic concerts in that city. At one of these concerts the pianist Gottschalk, who happened to be present, became so excited over her playing that he jumped upon the seat and proposed cheers for Madam Urso, and at the close of the performance introduced himself to her in the anteroom and fairly overwhelmed her with congratulations and praise. It was a great surprise and pleasure to her, as the opinion of such a musician was of real value. She now grew more confident The promise of her girlhood might yet be fulfilled. She would take new courage and go on with the work. She would practice and study every available moment. In time she would become indeed a great artist. She would not now stop to dream of future success She must work and work hard.

Success and triumph were near at hand and almost before she was ready to receive them, engagements to play flowed in upon her from every direction. The days of poverty and trial were over. A steadily inincreasing financial success followed her efforts and,

taught by the sorrowful experience of her childhood, she managed her affairs with wisdom and laid the foundation of her present independence. In May she gave a concert in Boston on her own behalf at Chickering hall and played *Grand duo brilltant* for piano and violin, *La Mucette de Portici* by *Wolff* and *De Beriot*, *Reverie* by *Vieuxtemps*, *Elegie* by *Ernst*, and the *William Tell Duo* by *De Beriot*.

These were the most popular pieces of the day. They all belong to the transcription or fantasie style. Enormously difficult and well calculated to please the fancy and amuse the ear, they give a hint of Madam Urso's ability at that time and show just about how far American culture had risen. It is interesting to notice them as we shall see how rapid and how great have been the changes in violin music in the last ten years that are included in this part of the story of a musical life.

In June she made a short tour through the Provinces and then returned to New York and spent the Summer quietly among friends and in practice upon her violin.

Nothing satisfied her in music. The true artist never is satisfied, but is ever urged onward by a noble discontent. The concert pieces demanded by the public, were not to her taste. She could do better work. She knew and played finer works than these. The people would not listen to them. She would wait. In time they would grow up to something better. In all this she was ever urged on higher and higher, trying new feats of technical skill, drawing forth even finer

tones and continually advancing towards the higher standard of excellence she had set for herself. In all this she met with obstacles and difficulties. She could not have instruction from others. There were none in the country who could teach her anything and her concerts broke in upon her time seriously. She was studying for public appearance and appearing in public at the same time.

On the opening of the musical season in the fall of 1863 Madam Urso was engaged by Mr. P. S. Gilmore to play at his concerts in Boston. The summer of apparent idleness had been well spent. Her study and practice bore splendid fruit and her genius bloomed out into new and wonderful music that seemed to exhale a perfume as ethereal and delicate as it was peculiar and original. The woman's hand and heart lived in the music. To all the brilliancy and technical skill of a man she added a feminine lightness of touch, that in airy lightness, and grace, melting tenderness and sweetness is past description. Her violin now seemed to breathe and sigh. The tears would come to the listener's eyes he knew not why. The tears were in the tones. The sorrow of her life exhaled in chastened sweetness from the strings. Her heart ran out on her finger tips and lived in her music.

It is not surprising that at one of these concerts the musicians of Boston should have united in presenting a testimonial of respect and admiration and personal regard to her as an artist and a woman. The letter was

signed by the musical people of note resident in Boston and was accompanied by a handsome gold watch.

However interesting the details of these events may seem it is impossible to dwell upon them all. We must take the more salient points in Madam Urso's artist life, choosing such events as best illustrate her character and best explain the secret of her success that we may learn the true artistic lesson of her life and works. After traveling under Mr. Gilmore's direction through all the principal towns of New England, Madam Urso left his company and spent the summer months in traveling in her private carriage with a small party of her own, and giving occasional concerts by the way.

She reached New York late in the fall and at once organized a new company, and visited Canada. This trip was a remarkably successful one, and extended till January, 1865. She then appeared at the Philharmonic concerts at New York and Brooklyn, and on reorganizing her company visited Northern and Central New York. She was at Syracuse at the time of the assassination of Lincoln and moved by the event composed an elegy for the violin that was afterwards performed with great success at Rochester.

The early summer of this year was spent among friends and in retirement and was entirely devoted to incessant and long continued practice. Practice upon her violin is the one thing that is never neglected. If it is not reported on every page it is because it is always present, never forgotten. This is the one price

every great artist must pay for his or her position. What a commentary on our American haste to reach results does Madam Urso's life-work present? She has genius. Genius without labor is worse than vain.

In June Madam Urso sailed in the China from Boston and passing through London returned once more to France her native land. Returned to live in dear old Paris but not in the Rue Lamartine. The city of her childhood sorrows and trials now became the city of her triumph. Her reputation both as a wonder-child and an artist had been almost wholly American. Now she was to take a bolder flight and win a European reputation. The opinions of our musical people were to be more than confirmed at Paris.

Her first appearance in Paris was at the invitation of the Count of Niewerkerke, then Minister of fine arts. The concert was a private one given at the Louvre before a seclet audience of artists, authors, musicians, officers and members of the government, diplomatic corps, etc. Every one appeared in uniform or decorated with medals or other insignia of rank, "and the young woman from America" whom nobody knew, and nobody ever heard, whose name even, was hardly known quietly took a seat in a corner as if she was only some stray person who had wandered into the grand assembly by some mistake. No little surprise was manifested when the Count sought her out and offered his arm to the young stranger to escort her to the seat of honor. Her violin case. It laid at her feet on the floor. If he

would kindly ask a servant to bring it? Servant, indeed! No, he would be proud to carry it himself. And he did while the interest and curiosity was roused to unusual excitement, and every one asked who the young American could be that she should receive such attention. A prophet is always without honor in his own country, and the poor flute player's daughter who had struggled through their own famous Conservatory as a child was almost unknown as a young woman. Rumors of an American reputation had invaded Paris, but who were the Americans that they should venture to hold opinions concerning Art. What did they know about music? Nothing, of course. How could such a wild, barbarous country know anything at all?

The violin was taken out and with a few strokes of her bow the almost unknown young woman was admitted to be a peer among them all. Never was an artist received with greater honors and distinction. One performance and her reputation was established. They suddenly found she was, as it were, one of themselves. France was her native land, Paris her home and so no honor they could bestow upon her would be too great. Pasdeloup, the orchestral director, was present and then and there invited her to play with his famous orchestra. So it was that the doors of fashionable and artistic Europe were thrown open at one wave of the magic bow. Our artist played the great Concerto in E by Mendelssohn with Pasdeloup's magnificent orchestra at the hall of the Conservatory and won a splendid

triumph on the very spot where in the days of her poverty-tinted childhood she first drew her bow before her severe old masters who had tried so hard to bar the young feet out of the paths of art.

For a year Madam Urso remained in France studying, listening to the best music to be heard, mingling with players of her own artistic stature and, as it were, renewing her musical youth by drinking deep at the fountains that flow from one of the great art centres of the world. Dear, sleepy old Nantes was visited and once more she played in the same old place where she first drew her bow in those almost forgotten days of her childhood. Not a thing had changed. It seemed as if even the same cats sat on the sunny walls and as if the same old women filled their water jars at the fountains and toiled up and down the steep streets. There were the geraniums in the windows just as she had seen them in her childhood. Her father's organ stood in the dusty organ loft at the church of the Holy Cross, and even the same grey cobwebs festooned the arches above the seat where she used to sit and listen to the music. All her father's old friends came to see her and brought their grandchildren. The Town Hall would not contain the hundreds that beseiged the doors to see the Rose of Montholon, the woman who had made their town famous.

Many places in France were visited, and many concerts were given in Paris and other cities. It was a life of success, honors and happiness. More than all,

it was home. For all that, another home claimed her, she must return to her adopted home, and in September 1866, Madam Urso returned to this country with renewed musical strength, increased ability and her talents brought to even higher culture than ever.

Every life has its dull spots—its period of uneventful living. Even public life with its exciting experiences, perpetual change and scenes, its endless procession of new faces may in time become monotonous. The artist life of Camilla Urso has been active and varied to a remarkable degree, but to repeat the details of such a succession of concert tours would be simply wearisome. Events are of small consequence except as illustrative of character and we must only select such as serve to show the woman and the artist in her true character. On returning from Europe Madam Urso at once resumed her concerts and appeared in New York and others cities. In January, 1867, she was engaged to play the *Mendelssohn Concerto* at one of the concerts of the Harvard Musical Association in Boston, and in order to be present in good season for rehearsal started two days before from New York by the way of Springfield. On the road she encountered a severe snow storm and was blockaded thirty-six hours between Worcester and Boston. Determined to keep her engagement with the Harvards she pushed on as long as the train would move. Again and again they were stopped, in gigantic drifts that came up to the tops of the cars. The train people resolutely

shoveled their way through and pushed on again. The day of the concert came and still they were twenty miles or more from Boston. The fires gave out and not a thing could be obtained to eat or drink. Still she would not give it up. Perhaps the train would yet reach the city in time for the concert. Finally the city came in sight. The wind had blown the the snow away from the track on the marshes behind the city and the last mile was made in good time and then the train plunged into another drift just beyond the junction of the Providence Railroad and where the Dartmouth street bridge now stands. It only lacked 60 minutes of the concert hour. She would leave the cars and walk into the city. Perhaps she might be in time yet. One of the gentlemen of the party took her violin case and they set out to reach the houses on Boylston street that were in plain sight not twenty rods away. It was a desperate undertaking but she resolved to try it. She must get to the Music Hall if possible. The snow might be overcome but she had not reckoned on the temperature, and before she had gone twenty yards down the track she found her hands were rapidly freezing and she seemed ready to faint and fall in the terrible cold. The gentlemen at once took her up and after a tremendous effort succeeded in carrying her as far as the signal house. She must get into shelter or perish almost in our streets. The burly signal man saw the party and opened the door of his round house and took them in. Madam Urso's hands were stiff and

bloodless and in their fright her friends thought they were forever lost. Even Madam Urso's strong, brave spirit was utterly broken down over the appalling disaster. Of what use was her life if the cunning of her fingers was to be thus rudely destroyed. It is small wonder that the disaster almost crushed her and brought the bitterest tears to her eyes. The grimy signal man took in the situation at once and resorted to measures that were at once as effectual as they were grotesque and amusing. Kneeling down on the floor and taking off his cap he bid the gentlemen rub her hands in his tangled and matted hair. It was a most ludicrous remedy but it worked to a charm. The gentle heat brought the blood slowly back and after half an hour's rubbing on the man's big head she entirely recovered.

"Thet's the way we always does, mum. Many's the poor brakeman's fingers I've saved by rubbin 'em in some one's thick head o' hair."

Whatever the philosophy of this wonderful method of treatment, Madam Urso can give her testimony to its perfect success, and within an hour she was so far recovered that she could laugh as heartily as any over the adventure. The concert hour had come and gone while the party were sheltered in the signal house on the Back Bay and there was no help for it. She had done her best and even risked her life to fulfill her engagement. There was nothing more to be done except to reach the city in safety. The signal man

helped the party over the tracks and up the banks and they set out once more for Boylston Street. After a severe struggle the party reached the first house but as the cold was intense they decided to get under shelter as quickly as possible and at once rang the bell. A woman put a frightened face out the door and gave one look at the sorry looking party and slammed the door in their faces. They at once rang the next bell but here the people wouldn't even open the door though they slyly peeped out the window at the forlorn looking party on the steps. Madam Urso's hands were again growing intensely cold in spite of the fur gloves she had accepted from one of the gentlemen; and his own hands were bare. They must get in somewhere or perish in the storm. The next house opened to them at once, and in spite of their rather battered looks they were welcomed and offered the best the house contained. The bath-room, chambers and dining hall were free to them and it seemed as if the daughters of the house could not do enough to minister to the wants of the unhappy party. The discovery of whom they entertained only added to the warmth of the reception and finally a sleigh was found and just at night fall Madam Urso was once more with friends. Singular as it may seem, she has not found out to this day who so kindly opened their house to her in her distress. In the storm and excitement of the occasion the number of the house was forgotten and there was no name on the door. The family did not give their name and if

it should so happen that they read this, they may know how pleasantly Madam Urso cherishes the memory of their kindness.

Carl Rosa who was then in Boston took Madam Urso's place at the Harvard Concert, and on the next morning Mr. Dwight the Treasurer called and paid her the usual honorarium, just as if she had been present. Madam Urso remained in Boston and appeared at the next concert as she makes it a rule always to fulfill every engagemet tno the letter, whatever may be the expense and inconvenience it may cause her.

Immediately after the little adventure in Boston, just mentioned, Madam Urso was engaged by Mr. P. S. Gilmore to travel through the New England States. This tour was a very successful one and at its close she spent the Summer quietly at Saratoga and Long Branch. The season of 1867 and 1868 was an exceedingly busy one and engagements were made in all parts of the country with uniform success. In the Spring she found the labor and travel were telling upon her health, and in June she sailed once more for Europe where she spent three months in Bologne and Paris, in retirement. Though not giving concerts she practiced as steadily and earnestly as her health would permit. The quiet sea-shore life at Bologne, the drives on the beach and the charming social life rested her fully and in September she was once more ready to resume her profession in this country. To report it all is quite beyond our limits. Engagements to play

crowded upon her from all parts of the country, and every concert seemed to be more successful than the last. One given as a complementary testimonial to Madam Urso by the musicians of Boston, in January 1869, brought out all her friends and packed the Music Hall with an audience such as it never saw before. About the same time she was elected an honorary life member of the Philharmonic Society of Philadelphia. This Summer, like the last, was passed in Bologne and Paris and was wholly devoted to study and practice, with some recreation.

CHAPTER II.

THE SILVER BRICK.

On the 24th of September (1869) Madam Urso started from Paris for a new and untried field. Stopping one week only in New York she pushed on towards the Pacific and landed in San Francisco on the 22d of October. Only four weeks from Paris to San Francisco including six days in New York. This will illustrate her power of physical endurance, and the experience that followed this rapid journey will serve to show her business capacity, her executive talents, and her indomitable energy. The seven months passed in California make one of the most remarkable episodes of her life and it must be examined in some detail.

The party took rooms at the Occidental Hotel and the very first evening Madam Urso was honored by a serenade, though no announcement of her arrival had been made. Certainly, the musical people of the Pacific Slope were eager to welcome her. It seemed so, for on announcing a concert at Platt Hall, there was a

greater demand for tickets than had ever been known in that part of the country for any entertainment whatever its character. Three more concerts were given with every available seat and standing place occupied, and then three sacred concerts on successive Sunday evenings at the California Theatre, were announced. All of these concerts were of a classical character, the first of the kind ever given in the State and to bring them out properly the best talent to be found was engaged, including the Brignoli Opera Troupe then traveling in California.

Never in her experience had concert giving been more successful and profitable than here. It seemed as if she had captured all their hearts and brought the golden State to her feet by one wave of her violin bow. Deeply sensible of the feelings of respect and admiration entertained for her by the people she resolved in some way to testify her appreciation and to give material expression of her thanks. She looked about for some worthy institution upon which she could bestow the benefit of a series of concerts, or musical festival. After some investigation and private correspondence Madam Urso wrote the following letter that was dated at the Occidental Hotel, San Francisco, December 1st 1869.

To the President and Board of Directors of the Mercantile Library Association of San Francisco:

GENTLEMEN: The present embarrassment of your Society having come to my knowledge, and wishing in

some suitable manner to show my gratitude to the people of this city for the kindness and appreciation I have met with during my visit, I have thought of no better method to do so than in offering you the benefit of a grand musical entertainment such as I originally intended giving here, with the sincere hope that it may prove a help towards relieving the Mercantile Library of its present difficulties.

Should my offer be accepted, I will, gentlemen, consecrate all my time during the two months necessary for its preparation, to make it a grand success. I am gentlemen, Yours obediently

CAMILLA URSO.

This generous offer was at once accepted and without delay the officers of the Association, the city government, and in fact, the whole community united with her to make the proposed festival one of the great musical events of the Pacific Slope. Boston had given its musical festival, why not San Francisco? There, it had been comparatively easy. Here, it was an undertaking almost too vast and difficult for comprehension. There was not a choral society in the State. If there were a few choirs of male voices they had never sung together and though there were many individual singers and performers in different parts of the State they had never been brought together. A hall must be prepared, the orchestra, drilled, the music for the chorus selected and printed, and the whole festival lasting three days be planned, laid out, and carried into effect.

Never before has a single woman been so made a queen over an army of men, women and children.

One moment the event was announced the Occidental Hotel was beseiged by editors, musicians, officials, contractors, carpenters, decorators, chorus masters and a hundred others who thought they might be of use in some way. Madam Urso held high state in her rooms and heard each one in turn, gave him her commands, and bid him move on to his appointed work. The Mechanics' Pavillion, a huge wooden structure erected for the Mechanics' Institute Fair in 1868, was still standing. Orders to take it down had been given, but at her request they were revoked and a host of carpenters swarmed into the building and began to remodel it for the great Festival. Railroads, Hotels, and Telegraph companies were ready to obey her every wish in regard to the reception of the great company to be assembled. The State arsenal opened at her command and a whole park of artillery was ready to speak at the wave of her baton. An organ was built to order, and a drum more portentious than the Gilmore affair was manufactured. The firemen met to pound the anvils in the "anvil chorus" and Camilla herself drilled them in the work. And at the head of it all was the one woman, mistress of the whole kingdom, and with the resources of a State at command. As if this was not enough she personally assumed the entire expense and was responsible for the whole vast sum of thousands and thousands of dollars that the festival involved. Had it been a failure the Mercantile Association would not have lost a dollar. Every bill was in her own

name, be it for organ, contractors, printing music books or agents' fares by rail or boat.

The event exceeded expectation and was one of the most marked musical successes ever recorded. On Washington's birth-day, February 22d, 1870, ten thousand people filled the Mechanics' Pavilion to listen to Camilla Urso's concert. A chorus of twelve hundred composed the choir, and an orchestra of two hundred good musicians furnished the accompaniment for the choral members.

The programme was popular in its character and each piece was given with unexpected effect. The concert was opened at half past two by the performance of Von Weber's Jubilee Overture by the orchestra under the direction of Mr. Harold, the conductor of the festival. This was followed by a chorus for men's voices by the united singing societies of the State. Next the orchestra and military bands gave a selection of national airs and at the end the chorus and the entire audience rose and sang "My country 't is of Thee." The chorus, organ and orchestra then united to give the chorus "Night shades no longer," from Moses in Egypt, which was given in a skillful and effective manner. A chorus of men's voices from "Eurianthe" with horn obligato was next performed and then came the Anvil Chorus, with chorus, bands, orchestra, organ, battery and all the bells in the city united for accompaniment.

It was an event in its way and the irrepressible enthusiasm peculiar to the Californians found vent in

cheers and the waving of hats, handkerchiefs and whatever was in hand. Certainly Madam Urso had never in her whole experience seen such enthusiasm and she may have well wondered if it was not all some strange, fantastic dream. The band gave a selection from "Tannhauser" and then the concert closed with the "Star Spangled Banner" given with cannon, big drum, church bells, organ and great chorus.

The concert on the second day was honored with an audience of fifteen thousand persons, the largest assembly that had ever met in California. The programme began with the overture to "Ali Baba" which was followed by the "Gloria," from Mozart's Twelfth Mass. Then the orchestra gave two movements from the symphony in C, by Gade. "Sleepers wake," from St. Paul, and the "Prayer," from "Moses in Egypt," were next given in such a superior manner by the chorus, that the last number won an encore.

At this point Madam Urso appeared and met with a reception that for wild enthusiasm and fervor has probably never been exceeded by any concert audience. The very proper coldness and passiveness of Eastern audiences finds small favor beyond the mountains. The fifteen thousand people met under that roof tendered her an ovation the like of which has probably never been given to any artist in the world. Respect and love for the woman who had done so much for them, admiration for her genius, and gratitude for

her splendid efforts in behalf of the Mercantile Association roused the people to a pitch of excitement almost past belief. For a few moments it seemed as if they would never cease cheering, nor stop piling the mountains of flowers at her feet.

Then she took her violin and played for them, giving the Beethoven Concerto. The building was too vast for all to hear her instrument but they listened in eager silence and at the close there was another tempest of applause and showers of flowers till the stage about her was literally "knee deep in fragrance." She was twice called out after the performance, but the excitement and fatigue were too much for her and she declined to play again.

The chorus—"The Heavens are Telling," the overture to "Der Freyschutz," the Anvil Chorus, and the "Hallelujah" chorus, from the Messiah concluded the entertainment and the vast audience quietly dispersed.

The third day of the Festival was perhaps the most remarkable of all. The chorus on this day consisted of two thousand public school children, under the musical direction of Mr. Elliot, of San Francisco. The programme consisted of orchestral selections and choruses from the song books used in the public schools, sung by the children. The Hall was packed to its utmost limits and the concert was a perfect success, both in the high character of the music given, and the excellent manner with which it was rendered. We have

Madam Urso's testimony that the singing of the children was fully equal to the singing heard in the schools of Boston and other Eastern cities. Madam Urso played a selection of popular airs, including "Home, Sweet Home," and the national melodies, to the great delight of the young chorus, and the immense audience assembled to hear them. This children's concert was very successful and to gratify the great number of people who wished to attend it was repeated on the following Saturday.

On Thursday evening the seats were removed from the Pavilion and a grand ball was given in compliment to Madam Urso. The next day, Friday, the chorus and the orchestra volunteered and gave her a benefit concert. Like the other concerts of the Festival it was a great success, and gave fifteen thousand people an opportunity to listen to her playing, and to testify to their admiration of her work in their behalf. With the children's concert on Saturday afternoon the Festivale week was brought to a successful close. There was not an accident to mar the pleasure of the occasion and the cause of music in California received an impulse that may be felt to this day. The Mercantile Library received a gift of $27,000 as the result after every bill had been paid and everything promptly and thoroughly cleared up.

In looking at this singular episode in the life of Madam Urso we hardly know which to admire the most, the business skill and energy that carried it

through to a financial success, the womanly qualities that could win and hold the willing services of so many people in every walk of life or the artistic culture and insight that arranged the programme so as to at once please and instruct. The concerts were not too classical to drive the people away nor were they wholly popular. In all Madam Urso's art life it has always been her aim to lift up and instruct her hearers. First allure the people with simple music that they can understand and then give them something from the masters, something a little above their comprehension; a taste of classical music. They would receive a little of the pure and true art and in time they would learn to ask for nothing else. If she gave them nothing but high art they would be repelled and would not listen to any art at all. The concerts in California and those of the festival were arranged on this plan, and she remained on the Pacific coast long enough to see the wisdom of her method and to find that the people came to hear her gladly when she preached the gospel of true and high art. She has ever pursued this high aim and has lived to see a remarkable change come over the American people in their love of music. Of this more farther on.

Soon after the festival Madam Urso made an extensive concert tour through the interior towns of California and everywhere met with a most flattering reception. The musical societies that had sprung into existence at her command to assist in the festival turned out to welcome her in every town, the general interest in music

that the event had awakened throughout the State seemed to have spread to most remote and out of the way corners among the mountains, and every town seemed to try to out-do the rest in showing her attention and in crowding her concerts. At Virginia City the choral Society gave her a reception and elected her an honorary member of their association. Each member was expected to wear a badge of a miniature silver brick. They presented her with a real silver brick. (life size) and as it was too heavy to wear or even lift from the floor, they presented two bricks of smaller size, in the shape of ear rings. Certainly it was a most extraordinary present, in admirable keeping with the place and the people.

After visiting all the principal places of interest among the mountains and having a most delightful and interesting journey, Madam Urso returned to San Francisco in May. Here she gave a few concerts and on the 16th of the month started once more for Paris and taking with her, the famous silver brick, a most beautiful diamond pendant, and gold chain, a gift from San Francisco friends, the respect and good wishes of thousands of people whom she had charmed with her music and her warm heart, and $22,000 in gold as the net result of her visit.

On the 18th of the following month she was once more in the quiet of her own home in Paris.

It is not a matter of surprise to find that after Madam Urso's seven months' experience in California

there came a severe physical reaction. The labor and anxiety of the trip were tremendous, and even her iron constitution gave way, and she broke down utterly the moment the excitement of her journey to Paris was over. For three months she was confined to her room with brain fever, and only left it when she was driven out of the city by the events of the Franco-Prussian war. She was hastily removed from her house on a stretcher, on the 15th of September, and took one of the last trains that left the city before the siege, and was carried on her bed to Boulogne. The change was a fortunate one; the sea air brought a favorable change in her illness, and her health was restored. In October she was sufficiently recovered to bear the journey to England, and she took up her residence in London.

The winter of 1870 and '71 was passed in private life, but not by any means in idleness. It seemed as if she had now won a position in which she could command her time for study and practice. This great artist, who had commanded the plaudits of two continents, quietly gave herself up to renewed study, to more faithful practice, and to still greater efforts towards perfection in her art. In London she could hear the greatest players in the world. The finest and most scholarly programmes were to be heard every week. She had nothing to do but to hear the best music, study the styles of the masters, catch the splendid inspiration of their works, and to transfer to

her own heart and hand whatever of the great and fine in music they had to offer to her. It was a winter of hard work upon her violin, and a season of peace and rest from the dreadful wear and tear of public artist life, and its fruits may to-day be seen in the eminence she has attained in the very highest walks of violin music. The classical concerts that she gave in Boston three years later testify to the conscientious labor that was bestowed upon her instrument during this quiet winter in London.

Here do we see the true artist-soul. We here catch the earnest meaning of Camilla Urso's life—the intense love of music, the devotion to its highest aims, the eagerness to work, to study and to learn all that is best and true. Genius, indeed, shines in her music, but without these years of honest work the genius would only be a delusion and a mockery. With work it becomes almost divine.

In June of 1871, Madam Urso returned to Paris and spent the summer there in comparative retirement. She gave no public performances, but held musical receptions at her own house once a week, that were attended by all the most noted artists who lived in Paris or visited the city during that summer.

In the early winter, in reply to a summons from London, Madam Urso appeared at the Memorial Concert to Mendelssohn, and played his great concerto at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham. This was her first

appearance in England, and, as we can well understand, it immediately placed her in a foremost position among the artists of that country. After giving a few concerts in Paris, she again took up her artist life, and appeared at the St. James' Hall in February, 1872.

These two concerts in London and Sydenham at once opened wide the door to a new field in which her talents found general recognition and constant employment. If the California experience seemed like some Eastern dream, this season in London was like stepping back into the last century, when princes and dukes gave banquets to musicians and entertained minstrels with royal liberality. Invitations to play before both the Old and New Philarmonic Societies, and at many other notable musical gatherings came to her faster than she could accept them. She played for the Royal Society of Musicians, the Duke of Edinburgh presiding on the occasion, and she was also asked by the Duke of Edinburgh to play at Montague House at a reception given in his honor by the Duchess of Buccleuch. Other persons of distinction in London invited her, and everywhere she charmed them all by the grace and beautiful finish of her playing, and by her unaffected and simple manners. Invitations to play at private houses came so fast that a carriage was kept in waiting to take her from house to house, that she might appear and play at several different places the same night.

To republican readers, this appearing at private

houses for pay may seem peculiar and perhaps beneath the dignity of the true artist. It is the custom of the country. Persons of wealth wishing to entertain their friends give a musical evening, at which a programme of choice music is given by artists hired for the occasion. Usually each performer gives one piece and then retires. He is not expected to appear till just before his turn comes, and then he briefly presents his respects to the lady of the house, plays his little piece and gathers his wedding garments about him and flies away in a Hansom cab to the next house, where he does it all over again. Then he rattles through the deserted streets at break-neck speed to be on time at another palatial mansion, where his piece appears near the end of the programme. The audiences hardly have time to learn who is playing or singing before the bird has flown and a new one, just out of his carriage, is ready to sing and fly again. The very much dressed audience comes and goes at each place, and the music is often drowned in the clatter of half empty wine-glasses and the rattle of more empty heads. It is very grand, exceedingly tiresome, and wonderfully profitable. A player or singer of first-class reputation who is willing to follow up a London season in this style, can win more money than by a year of concert giving. Each house pays for its one piece of music, and as many as five houses can be visited in one evening.

It is a rather startling method of procedure, but it is the custom of the country. Madam Urso could not

decline to do as all the other musicians did, however much she might stand on the simple dignity of her American name. She everywhere called herself an American, and, as it always happens, won the more respect and admiration for her independence. It is always an advantage to be known as an American in Europe, and Madam Urso is only too glad and proud to acknowledge all that she owes to the country of her adoption.

The English press could here be largely quoted, to give some idea of the high position Madam Urso won in the musical world at that great art centre. It is needless to give it, as it is well known that her American reputation, great as it is, is not equal to that in England. The English are even more willing to give Camilla Urso her honors due than are we, and having said this we have said enough.

In July, 1872, Madam Urso returned to Boulogne, and after a short rest returned to New York, early in September. A concert tour through the Canadas was at once taken, and after a brief and most successful trip, she returned to New York. She afterwards made a journey to New Orleans, where she assisted at the opening of the new Exposition Hall. Unfortunately, Camilla Urso was here taken sick with the chills and fever, and was obliged to come North at once. She came to Boston, but lost much valuable time, both from concerts and practice, by a long illness at the St. James Hotel.

We now come, as it were, in sight of the present time. The year 1873, though it was a disastrous one to art interests generally, by reason of the panic, was one of uninterrupted success for Madam Urso. She took a brief rest during the summer near New York, but during the remainder of the time gave an unrupted succession of concerts in all the Northern States, so that it seems as if the sound of her violin still rang in our ears.

CHAPTER III.

THE GOSPEL OF WORK.

It is now in order to review briefly the events of this remarkable art life, and to see what lessons it may teach to the musician, the student, and the art lover. Whether we look at the child, gazing in large-eyed wonder at the festival in the Church of the Holy Cross, the patient girl, trudging day by day through the quiet streets of Nantes to take her lessons, the pale student in the conservatory, the sober-faced maiden who so won all our hearts so long ago in Boston, the brilliant young woman who flashed out so suddenly into the highest walks of art, the great artist born of a wonder child, or the simple American woman, Camilla Urso, in whatever station we view her, we see the dignity and reward of honest work. Everywhere we see the same passionate love of music, the same eagerness to study, to learn the all there is of it, and to play with ever increasing skill. Genius is the great gift that has been bestowed upon her. She did not hide it in a napkin, but with heart and soul she did her best to make it a

good and acceptable gift to art and humanity. Whether giving concerts among our prairie cities, resting by the sea-shore at Boulogne, traveling among the mountains of California, studying the great masters of the violin in London or Paris, or among friends in Boston, she is always practicing upon her beloved instrument. It is never out of her hands a day, unless ill or fatigued by traveling. Each month she means shall show some improvement, and from year to year she has gone on till the present standard of excellence has been reached. To what perfection her skill has been carried, we shall leave others to say at the end of this book.

The musician, in looking back over this life of an artist, naturally asks what changes she may have seen in the art life of the world during the dozen years or more she has been before the American public. We purposely select the American public, because it is of the most interest to us, and because the art life of Europe is somewhat different from ours, and less liable to changes. Madam Urso's own views upon the subject are instructive and encouraging, and we present them in very nearly her own words. Taken as a whole, the people of this country are somewhat crude and uneducated in their ideas of music. They certainly love music; they like music even better than the Europeans, but they do not exactly know what they want. If, when an orchestra or an artist is visiting a Western town, you ask a man if he is going to the concert, he will often say, "No, I have seen him once." Hearing the

music given by a splendid orchestra does not seem to be thought of any consequence Having "seen" the orchestra, there is no further interest in it. On the other hand, with all their want of education, the people of this country learn about music faster than any people she ever saw. They are greatly interested in music, are willing to admit their ignorance concerning it, are exceedingly eager to learn and anxious that their children should, at least, study the rudiments, that they may enjoy and understand it. They are ready and able to pay more for music than any nation in Europe. If they think they are really to hear something that pleases them, they will pack the hall whatever the price. The music that pleases them is not always the best, for the simple reason they do not know what is best. As fast as they learn better, they drop whatever is before them and at once take up something else. The sudden disappearance of negro minstrel music is an evidence of this. The people outgrew it, and it passed away, as it were, in a night.

In instrumental music there has been a steady advance from the merely showy and technical to the purely classical. Ten years since they would crowd the hall to hear the "Carnival." Had Madam Urso presented the Beethoven Spohr, or the Mendelssohn Concertos, the people would not have listened in patience through a single performance. If they heard it at all, it would be under a sort of silent protest, and the next time the piece was offered there would be nobody

there. These remarks apply to the country generally. In some of the older cities classical music of a high order would have found a certain proportion of listeners. From year to year, all this has changed. By introducing into the lightest and most popular programmes some short selection from the great masters of violin music, Madam Urso has gradually taught her audiences what they should admire, and, by persistent and gentle urging, she has led them to a knowledge of the best and highest in art. In this Madam Urso is not alone. All true artists do thus teach the people and try to lift them up to something higher and purer. It is this that makes the divine in music. Happily, our people are willing enough to be taught. The general education, and our freedom from precedents enables all art to grow faster here than anywhere else. We are still, as a people, crude and musically ignorant, but we are fast learning. The changes in the character of concert music may be seen almost from year to year; the standard continually advances and, certainly, there is everything to encourage and satisfy the most ardent lover of music in the country. While we have such artists as Madam Urso among us we have much to be thankful for, and may press on till we reach the high standard of excellence she ever keeps before herself.

We may here offer a short sketch of Madam Urso's personal appearance and manners, when free from the restraint of public life. The ideas generally held con-

cerning her "personally" are somewhat incorrect, as the following will show:

* * * * * *

It was a cloudy, winter's afternoon, and the place seemed dull and gloomy. The Boston Music Hall is, at best, bare and vast, and by daylight is particularly unattractive. The great organ pipes appear cold and lustreless, and the light tints on the walls are not very comforting. The orchestra of the Harvard Musical Association were upon the stage, under the leadership of Carl Zerrahn, and a few privileged subscribers, numbering a hundred or two, were gathered together at one side, as if to keep each other in countenance. Over such a wide floor it takes a thousand or more to make a comfortable and social company.

The orchestra were at work upon the 6th Symphony of Beethoven, placidly overcoming its difficulties, stopping now and then to polish up some delicate point, and taking things in an easy and rather indifferent manner. In the midst of it entered at the side door a young woman in fur cape, skull cap of the jauntiest pattern, and some plain dark dress. The hackman came behind, bearing the great brown leather violin case. With a serene and placid manner she mounted the stage, and bidding the man place the violin case on the steps before the organ, she quietly took off her outer garments and sat down on the steps. A friendly nod and a smile to Zerrahn and then a cordial hand shake to the librarian of the Society. She had brought

the orchestral parts of the concerto she was to play, and began to talk in an animated manner about their use. The audience had no longer any ears for the symphony, and though it went steadily on, they were all eyes to see and admire their favorite thus "at home" among them.

Having arranged everything to her satisfaction, she came down into the house and was quickly surrounded by a group of artists and others. For all she had a hearty hand shake, a smile, and words of genial and animated welcome. No pretty miss in the company more admired, no merry talker more sought for than this unaffected, simple-minded woman. Beating time on the back of the seat with one finger, nodding to acquaintances, speaking to all in turn, now in French, and now in the best of English, she sat the most observed and admired of all the goodly company, and the most serene and happy.

Presently the symphony rehearsal came to an end, and, without the slightest hint of affectation, she rose from her seat, smiled her adieus, and went to the stage. Selecting a violin from its blue satin wrappings, she threw a white silk handkerchief over her left shoulder, tuned her violin, and took her place at the front of the stage in the centre of the orchestra. Tall Carl Zerrahn on his stand seems particularly giantesque beside such a little lady, and he pushed the platform on one side and stood upon the stage, to be nearer to her. She gave nods of recognition to members of the orchestra,

shook hands with Zerrahn, smiled and talked merrily with the leading violin, and then explained something concerning the music to Zerrahn. With her bow she gave the time, and the opening prelude began. She adjusted her handkerchief to her shoulder, and with a light touch played snatches of the orchestral part, as if to give a hint as to its proper rendering. Now comes the solo. The accompaniment is hushed, that not a note of the golden Mozartian melody be lost. Of her performance we will not here speak in detail, as it is described a page or two further on. Our present concern is with Madam Urso as a woman at home in her art, and among friends. Suddenly, in the midst of a brilliant passage, she stops, and lifting one finger she says, so that all can hear: "F natural." The first violins are caught napping, and without a book, and while playing her own part, she detects and corrects a mistake of a semitone in the accompaniment. There is no self-assertion or parade, but only an arch smile and a merry shake of the head, as if it was a good joke to catch them thus. A hearty laugh from orchestra and audience, and then the work is resumed. As the piece returns, she nods and smiles her approval, and the music goes on again. At the end of the movement comes a long *cadenza* of great difficulty. She treats it in that masterly and effective manner that seems so natural to her. Then follows a liberal round of applause from orchestra and spectators. Next comes the *andante* movement, the most beautiful of the three.

During the brief interval between the two she talks merrily with one and another, and when she is ready gives the time to the conductor. Zerrahn wields the *baton*, but Madam Urso is the real director. Her spirit guides the music and inspires the orchestra with unusual animation. The rather listless manner in the symphony is exchanged for painstaking care and attention. Camilla's earnestness and life seems to inspire them to greater effort, and their playing gains in vigor and precision. "Not too much fire, gentlemen." This is the slow movement, and she gently represses their enthusiasm. The feather like touch, the airy delicacy of her own playing, spurs them on to unwonted care and restraint. At the end comes another long *cadenza*, that for soft, whispering tones, sweetness, grace, and vanishing lightness, is almost unequaled. Her face becomes serious. Her eyes have a far away expression, dreamy and tender, that soon affects the music. The magic violin sighs and breathes in melting tenderness. The melody floats upward, melting and fading away, exhaled into palpable silence. Not quite, for just as it seems ready to languish into nothing, a soft, sweet chord from the band completes the cadence and brings it to a natural end.

Shouts of "bravo" and loud applause greet this splendid effort, and she nods and smiles with a pleased and natural expression. Still, she is not satisfied. The band are not sufficiently delicate and light in the treatment of the last chord or two, and she bids them try it

again. Three times they go over it, before her exacting and lofty standard of perfection is reached.

Then comes the last movement. Vivacious, animated, and merry, it seems to suit her happy hearted nature, and she fairly revels in its brilliant melodies. Difficulties vanish like mist before the sun. It becomes a delight to dash through the sparkling passages. Clear, clean cut, vivid and sharp, like cut glass, the music stands out in bold characters. Not a note slighted or blurred. No obscurity or doubt about the most intricate passage. Curious little effects of *staccato* mingled with the most linked together *legato*. Bold flashes through chain lightning scales. Chords pouring forth in torrents, and then airy scraps of melody, as if the theme had broken up into shining bits, glistening drops, and sparkles of song.

An artist soul blooms before us. Her face is rapt, and almost severe. In a moment it is over, and her features break into a pleasant, natural smile. Amid the applause she returns to the floor and mingles with the people. No affectation, no looking for praise; nothing but sweetness and friendliness. No commonplace woman, with brush or needle in hand, could be more simple and winsome, no genius could be more self-forgetting.

We may now properly close the chapter, and bring this story of an artist life up to the present time by a brief sketch of a series of classical concerts given by Madam Urso in the Spring of 1874, in Boston. They

were remarkable concerts; both in the character of the music given, and in the crowded and appreciative audiences that attended them. As an expression of Madam Urso's present ability as an artist, we offer the opinion of the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, our best local critical paper, and, for the present, bring this story to its logical end. May it be many years before it becomes necessary to add anything more to it, except to record her continued success as an artist, and happiness as a good and true woman.

The *Advertiser's* criticism upon the first concert of the series we present in full for the reason that it expresses the critic's opinion of Madam Urso's general character as a musical *artiste*, directress, and manager, as well as of her rank and position as a violinist:

"The Horticultural Hall was entirely filled last evening, and Madam Camilla Urso was welcomed back to Boston with an enthusiasm evidently as unaffected as it was hearty. The programme of the concert was singularly choice, but it was noticeable especially for the contrast which it presented to the bills of most of our *virtuosi:* in three of its numbers only did Madam Urso take part, and those three were a trio for violin, piano, and violoncello, a sonata for violin and piano, and a string quartette. Disappointment at not hearing the principal musician in a solo performance may have marred the pleasure of some of the audience; and at the other concerts of the series it is very likely that some provision may be made for the gratification of this natural desire. But the entire arrangement of last night seemed to us significant—delightfully significant of that noble, generous, self-forgetting spirit which has

always distinguished this remarkable performer, and which is not the least of her titles to the grand name of *artiste*. Here seems to be as little as possible of vain show of self; nothing at all of that jealous littleness which tolerates no companions either as composers or interpreters; the *maximum* of appreciation and reverence for the great authors, and of devotion to the best and worthiest in music. In the concert of last evening Madam Urso carried the higher principle so far that, as has been said, her own name appeared alone neither as author nor performer.

The three chief numbers of this fine programme were a trio in C-minor, op. 102, by Raff; a sonata in F-major, No. 9, by Mozart; and Schubert's posthumous quartette in D-minor. The Raff trio was new to Boston. It is a long and elaborate work, the absolute merit of which is not to be pronounced upon after a single hearing. That it is startlingly brilliant and striking in at least two of its numbers is plain at once, however; and there can be no denying or doubting its great vigor and originality. The *scherzo* has remarkable ingenuity in its harmonic forms and instrumental combinations; and the *andante*, amazing in its melodic variety and richness, and reflecting, apparently, many moods of the composer's mind, yet produces a unity of impression which proves the presence of a strong and self-poised genius. The Mozart sonata for violin and piano is exceedingly interesting in all its three movements, light and airy in its general character,—except in the *andante*, which is touched with pensiveness,—and not striking very far down in its suggestions, but full of fresh beauty and consummate in its symmetrical grace. In the happiest contrast with the sonata was the wonderful D-minor quartette of Schubert. No better illustration of the marked divergence between the modes of expression natural to two master composers

could have been chosen than these. The invariable law of Mozart's genius—in spite of, or perhaps, in aid of its broad inclusiveness—is condensation or conciseness; of Schubert's, it is expansion and diffusiveness. But where the genius is so vital and inspiring as that which shines in every line of the D-minor quartette, the amplitude never degenerates into tediousness. There may be profusion in the host's providing, but no surfeit in the guest's appetite.

In considering the quality of the performance one is tempted at first to the natural remark that Madam Urso's power cannot be so plainly shown in concerted as in solo music. But in the very utterance, we find ourselves hesitating and more than doubtful. For purely mechanical effects and for all the immense variety of mere instrumental and personal display the solo, of course, offers unequaled opportunities. But, after all, of how little real value and beauty are these pyrotechnics of the profession; how shallow is the stream of emotion which flows from them, and how barren, dry and brief is the pleasure which accompanies their recollection! If proofs were sought that Madam Camilla Urso retained her skill in all its amazing perfection and her genius in all its vitality and inspiration, they were abundant indeed at the concert of last evening. There was the same grand steadiness and strength; the same absolute faultlessness in purity of tone; the same fine discrimination and delicacy; the same minute clearness and cleanness, so that in the most rapid and difficult delivery nothing was slurred or confused; the same docile yielding to the spirit of the composer and to the demands of her fellow-musicians. And more than this, there was ample room for the exhibition of the expressive and sympathetic power, which was always the first title of Madam Urso—as of every great violinist—to the highest rank in her art. Her violin in these fine

concerted pieces spoke with the same "golden mouth" as of old, commanding, inspiring, defying and pleading by turns. And in such music as that of the well-nigh incomparable "*Tema con variazioni*" of the Schubert quartette, the highest eloquence of the king of instruments is not only permitted but demanded."

Another view of the professional and technical skill of Madam Urso is given by the critic of the *Advertiser* in the following words:

"We have said that Madam Urso's place as a violinist is in the first rank; it is hardly necessary to add, that among performers of her own sex she is unquestionably the very first in the world. It is, indeed, only within a comparatively few years that the claims of women to superiority as violinists have been treated with anything better than sneers. And the supercilious and intolerant spirit which dictated such treatment had at least a much solider foundation than the narrow conservatism which refused to admit women into the lists with poets, novelists, sculptors, and painters: for power and force are the primal conditions of the highest success as a performer upon the violin, and most women would undoubtedly be weak players as compared with most men. But the genius of art—who, after all, is one and the same, whatever form the art may take—is no respecter of persons; nay, more, he demands for his high tasks those of every clime and rank, and of both sexes. And from each and every one he asks a peculiar service which no other could exactly render. And thus he has assigned to Madam Urso her own functions as an *artiste*. There is no denying the remarkable power and breadth of her style, which is far in advance of that exhibited by the majority of the best male performers;—her touch is at once as

firm as steel and as soft as velvet; her mere manual dexterity is extraordinary; and her intonations are as faultless as the steadiest of hands and the correctest of ears can make them,—witness, especially, her recent wonderful playing of *cadenzas* at a Harvard Symphony Concert. In all of this Madam Urso may be said to be a man, or the equal and compeer of man. But in the great expressive power to which we have often referred as her chief title to the highest place, the soul of the true and earnest woman finds its own exclusive utterance; and we get a something of tenderness, of sweetness, and of subtlety which is pre-eminently feminine. The world could not afford to lose this, though great performers were twenty times more numerous than they are. The age which has produced a Dickens and a "George Eliot," a Holman Hunt and a Rosa Bonheur, a Story and a Harriet Hosmer, must needs have added to the scroll upon which the titles of Joachim, of Vieuxtemps, and of Ole Bull are inscribed, the name of

CAMILLA URSO."

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